



SA YEARBOOK 2009/10
TOURISM



South Africa has the world's richest floral kingdom and a vast variety of endemic and migratory birds. It is also home to one-sixth of the world's marine species and has more species of wild animals than North and South America or Europe and Asia together. Its diversity, sunny skies and breathtaking scenery make it a popular holiday destination. The 2010 World Cup affords South Africa a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase the best the country has as a tourist destination.

In 2009, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism became the Department of Tourism, emphasising the importance of this sector.

Tourism has been identified as one of the key economic sectors with excellent potential for growth.

About 9,6 million foreign tourists visited South Africa in 2008, a 5,5% increase over the 9,1 million foreigners who visited the country in 2007.

The contribution of tourism to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have increased from R162,9 billion in 2007 to R194,5 billion in 2008. The estimated number of jobs created directly and indirectly in the economy through tourism increased by 10% from 946 300 in 2007 to 1 041 700 in 2008.

Over two million travellers passed through South Africa's ports of entry (arrivals and departures) in March 2009, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) announced in June 2009. These travellers were made up of 632 581 South African residents and 1 498 571 foreign travellers.

In March 2009, there were 195 589 same-day visitors and 493 559 overnight visitors (tourists) among the foreign arrivals. The volumes showed an increase of 7,9% (same-day visitors) and 1,9% (tourists) between February 2009 and March 2009. Road transport was the most common mode of travel used by 1 429 920 (67,1%) out of the 2 131 152 travellers. The number of travellers who used air transport was 681 487 (32%).

In March 2009, overseas tourists came mainly from Europe 109 457 (67,3%); followed by North America 23 906 (14,7%); Asia 13 252 (8,2%); Australasia 7 926 (4,9%); Central and South America 4 436 (2,7%); and the Middle East 3 585 (2,2%). According to Stats SA, virtually all tourists from Africa came from the Southern African Development Community SADC countries – 316 556 (96,2%). The distribution of the remaining tourists from Africa was as follows: East and Central Africa

5 946 (1,8%); West Africa 5 649 (1,7%); and North Africa 951 (0,3%).

Business tourism

South Africa has always been popular with international leisure travellers, but it is also fast becoming a preferred business tourism destination. Large international companies are eager to host international events, conferences and trade expos in the country, and business travellers are just as willing to attend.

The Department of Trade and Industry has identified business tourism as a niche tourism segment with growth potential.

For the past few years, South African Tourism (SAT) has focused on building the leisure market with business tourism, previously known as the Mice (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) industry, playing a smaller role. In 2005, SAT started to broaden its strategy into business tourism and in 2007, completed the Business Tourism Growth Strategy that highlighted key areas of focus and attractive segments to target.

Business tourism is different from business travel, which is undertaken for the purpose of conducting commercial or formal transactions or activities that are related to one's job, for example visiting a client, signing deals or negotiating a contract (including import/export). Business tourism, on the other hand, is a trip that is undertaken with the purpose of attending a conference, meeting, exhibition or event, or as part of an incentive trip.

While current business-tourism arrivals to South Africa do not fulfil all the objectives of SAT in the way the leisure market does, SAT believes that business tourism has an important role to play in three areas, namely contributing to foreign arrivals, reducing seasonality and transforming the economy by engaging with new and different product offerings.

Business-tourism delegates typically stay for a shorter length of time than leisure travellers, but they contribute to both a higher spend per day and greater distribution across the provinces of the country.

South Africa as a business-tourism destination offers world-class facilities and infrastructure alongside accessible wildlife, luxury and style, inspiring history and diverse cultures. It has a sophisticated business-tourism sector, providing top-class, yet affordable facilities and services,

from state-of-the art convention centres located in major cities, to a wide variety of pre- and post-conference leisure experiences, and all essential support and communications services.

South Africa is fast gaining recognition as a global player in the international meetings market and is ranked 34th on the International Congress and Convention Association's 2008 destination rankings. This includes successful hosting of some of the world's largest and most important meetings.

Business tourism is well positioned for growth after the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, which will leave upgraded infrastructure and new hotels and upgraded airports, further increasing the country's capacity to host large meetings.

In the first nine months of 2008, business travellers spent R2,4 billion in South Africa, 32% more than in the same period in 2007. Although the actual number of business travellers declined during this period, they spent more. The average amount spent per business traveller rose from R760 per day in 2007 to R1 200 per day in 2008.

Business tourism also has lucrative spin-offs for the leisure tourism industry. Business travellers often book tours to explore the region they are visiting, either before or after conferences. Many return to South Africa in subsequent years for holidays with friends and family.

It appears that South Africa is also starting to give shopping destinations such as Dubai a run for its money. The *2006 Annual Tourism Report*, compiled by the SAT Strategic Research Unit, indicated that shopping was the most popular activity across all purposes of visit.

Medical tourism

Medical tourism, or the process of seeking out medical treatment in another country, is a fast-growing source of income. It covers both elective procedures and specialised operations such as joint replacement and spinal fusion.

About 50 developed and developing countries claim medical tourism as a national industry. South Africa has offered these services for some time, but only recently has begun to earn a higher profile for itself in this field.

Most people come to South Africa for cosmetic surgery, but the country's skilled surgeons can also provide organ transplants, cardiac, orthopaedic and obesity surgery, and dentistry.

Of the 9,6 million foreign visitors to South Africa in 2008, it is believed that about 410 000, or 4,3%, were medical tourists.

By the end of 2009, a national strategy for medical tourism was expected to be completed. The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Thokozile Xasa, announced at the inaugural South African Health Tourism Congress, held in Johannesburg in July 2009, that the aim was to further entrench the medical tourism industry in South Africa.

The event attracted around 300 delegates from various divisions of the medical world, including insurance, hospital and government representatives, dentists, doctors, health facilitators and healthcare providers.

Adventure sports

When it comes to adventure sports, South Africa has lots to offer.

The 100-Mile, 50-Mile or 25-Mile Trail Run through the vast Addo Elephant National Park in the Eastern Cape is designed to test trail runners both mentally and physically. The trail tracks the mountains and valleys of the park. Runners are challenged to run primarily on tracks within the park itself as well as some stretches of gravel roads.

Port Elizabeth, tagged as the "Watersports Capital" of Africa, offers surf lifesaving, rubber ducking, jet-skiing, canoeing, surfing, paragliding and power-boating.

Jeffreys Bay, a neighbouring coastal town, is renowned worldwide among surfers as the home of the "perfect wave" and hosts the annual Billabong Classic, which draws the world's top surfers.

Sandboarding has become a major activity in some parts of South Africa. This sport is extremely

At a global level, the travel and tourism sector has emerged as one of the 21st century's critical drivers of economic growth, job creation and development of communities, regions and nations.

The "Tourism Economy", a vital source of employment, revenue, investment, trade and unity, has recently been recognised as a powerful stimulus for recovery from the global economic crisis.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation and the South African Government announced on 30 October 2009 that the first international Tourism, Sport and Mega-Events Summit would be held in Sandton, South Africa, in February 2010.

The summit was expected to provide a forum for active discussion, debate and direction around the leverage of mega-events as a vital force for sector growth and advancement in national development strategies.



popular near Cape Town, in the Eastern Cape and on Gauteng's old mine dumps. Every year, an annual sandboarding competition takes place in Betty's Bay, in the Western Cape.

South Africa is a perfect playground for quad-biking enthusiasts. There are over 60 different trails to experience, and a good selection of these also offer quad bikes for hire.

In South Africa, one can cycle/go horseriding in wildlife reserves, through the winelands, along the coast, up mountains and past waterfalls – the possibilities are almost endless, with enticing trails in every province.

South Africa is also one of the best shark-diving destinations in the world.

This country is home to the highest commercial bungee jump in the world. The 216-m Bloukrans Bridge attracts adventure-seekers from all around the world. The bridge is situated along the scenic Garden Route. A new addition to Bloukrans is the 200-m flying fox cable slide. There are a range of jumps on the much lower Gouritz River Bridge, which boasts South Africa's first bridge-swinging operation.

Tourism policy and initiatives

The newly formed Department of Tourism aims to fulfil the national Government's role towards creating the conditions for responsible tourism growth and development by promoting and developing tourism, thereby increasing job and entrepreneurial opportunities and encouraging the meaningful participation of previously disadvantaged individuals. The focus will be on facilitating the growth of the tourism industry by providing support to the public and private sectors, and the broader community.

With the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup™ well on its way, there are exciting developments in this sector and many new opportunities for South Africa

The *White Paper on Tourism* provides a policy framework for tourism development, and entails, among other things:

- empowerment and capacity-building
- focusing on tourism-infrastructure investment
- aggressively marketing South Africa as a tourism destination to international markets
- a domestic tourism and travel campaign.

Raising general awareness about the opportunities for domestic travel remains a priority. The aim is to encourage South Africans to travel within their country, make tourism products accessible to all, facilitate the development of a culture of

tourism and create a safe and welcoming environment for visitors.

Poverty-relief funding

The Department of Tourism's poverty-relief projects promote the development of community-owned tourism products and the establishment of tourism infrastructure, including roads, information centres and tourism signage.

These poverty-relief projects are categorised into product and infrastructure development, capacity-building and training, the establishment of small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) and business-development projects.

Welcome Campaign

SAT's Welcome Campaign, launched in 2004 at the Tourist Indaba, is about encouraging every South African to make every tourist feel at home, so that all tourists take with them an experience that stands out and encourages them to return.

Welcome Awards

The Welcome Awards recognise those businesses and individuals who raise the bar in the tourism sector by offering very high standards of customer care and providing service excellence.

The awards programme forms part of the broader Welcome Campaign, which aims to ensure that South Africa's tourism industry is prepared to host many nations leading up to 2010 and beyond.

The awards were created to give credit to those providers who go the extra mile to deliver service excellence in the tourism industry by:

- offering travellers authentically African experiences
- enhancing visitors' experiences, encouraging longer stays and repeat visits
- turning guests into ambassadors for South Africa.

The Welcome Awards also promote the best businesses within each category as examples to the industry, encouraging members of the industry

In 2008, Gauteng and the Western Cape were the most popular provinces visited (enjoying 32,3% and 26,9% of visitor nights respectively).

They also accounted for the bulk of expenditure on accommodation.

The third most popular province was KwaZulu-Natal with 10,7% of visitor nights. The most underservited province in the country was the Northern Cape with 0,9% visitor nights.



to share their ideas on how they can improve customer experiences and make their stay more enjoyable.

As an increasingly important sector of South Africa's economy, tourism has the potential to fuel the economy by creating jobs, reducing unemployment and improving the quality of life of all South Africans.

Awards are given in nine categories, namely: tourist attractions, tour operators, accommodation establishments, tourist guides, restaurants, Mice, online, travel agencies and parks.

The fourth annual Welcome Awards ceremony was held at Durban's Albert Luthuli Convention Centre at the Tourism Indaba in May 2009. The Accommodation Category was won by Karkloof Spa; the Tour Operator Category by Specialised African Tour Services; the Tourist Attraction Category by South African Breweries' World of Beer; the Tourist Guides Category by Linda Leung; the Restaurants Category by Nyoni's Kraal; the Mice Category by Van Ryn's Distillery; the Online Category by City Lodge Group; the Travel Agencies Category by South African Travel Centre, Benoni; and the Parks Category by Mokala National Park.

Sho't Left Campaign

In its ongoing quest to grow and sustain a robust domestic travel market in South Africa, SAT unveiled its renewed Sho't Left Campaign in August 2008. The domestic market is an exceptionally important one for the tourism industry.

Because it targets young people, the campaign strongly features adventure, entertainment and nightlife travel experiences. It showcases South Africa as an affordable and easy-to-do destination for all. This campaign aims to show young South Africans the emotional, educational and social benefits of travel.

The campaign features a series of media advertising targeting young South Africans and encouraging them to take more holidays in South Africa.

Since the launch of the Sho't Left website in April 2009, there had been an influx of traffic to the site.

The Promotions and Deals page of www.southafrica.net/shotleft had become especially popular, enjoying 4 700 page views a month, with users specifically searching for travel packages.

Social networking spaces Twitter, @ShotLeft, Facebook and YouTube are in place so that the market can start talking about how they see travel and what they feel about it.

In September 2009, e.tv's top youth soap opera *Rhythm City* saw characters Fats and Mpumi taking a Sho't Left to Durban.

South Africa's national radio station, Metro FM, features Sho't Left every Thursday morning when the feature gives weekly travel tips and updates on what is happening in the local industry.

Domestic tourism growth

About a million more South Africans toured in their own country in 2008 compared to the previous year, the Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus

Twenty-nine South African beaches were awarded Blue Flag status in 2009 – 10 more than in 2008. With the exception of Morocco, South Africa is the only African country implementing the Blue Flag Programme, and has done so with increasing success since 2001. Blue Flag is an international award scheme that acts as a guarantee to tourists that a beach they are visiting is one of the best in the world.

It is awarded to those that have achieved the highest quality in water, facilities, safety, environmental education and management. Beaches that have received Blue Flag accreditation include:

- MacDougall's Bay, Port Nolloth (new)
- Yzerfontein main beach, Yzerfontein (new)
- Big Bay beach, Bloubergstrand, Cape Town (new)
- Clifton fifth beach, Cape Town
- Camps Bay, Cape Town
- Muizenberg, Cape Town
- Strandfontein beach, Cape Town
- Mnandi beach, Cape Town
- Bikini beach, Gordon's Bay
- Kleinmond beach, near Hermanus (back in programme)
- Hawston beach, near Hermanus
- Grotto beach, Hermanus
- Lappiesbaai, Stilbaai, Southern Cape
- Santos beach, Mossel Bay (new)
- Hartenbos beach, Mossel Bay (new)
- Robberg fifth beach, Plettenberg Bay (new)
- Dolphin beach, Jeffrey's Bay
- Humewood beach, Port Elizabeth
- Hobie beach, Port Elizabeth
- Wells Estate, north of Port Elizabeth
- Kelly's beach, Port Alfred
- Kariega main beach, Kenton-on-Sea (new)
- Boknes beach, Kenton-on-Sea (new)
- Gonubie beach, East London (back in programme)
- Trafalgar beach, South Coast, KwaZulu-Natal (new)
- Marina beach, South Coast, KwaZulu-Natal
- Ramsgate beach, near Margate
- Margate beach
- Alkantstrand, Richard's Bay (new).



van Schalkwyk, said in July 2009 at the release of SAT's domestic travel statistics for 2008. Domestic tourism is particularly valuable to the country because, unlike foreign tourism, it is not seasonal.

To continuously support the growth of the domestic industry, South Africa is:

- promoting the domestic-tourism brand
- promoting a set of experiences that relate to South African consumers
- distributing appropriate information in specific places
- facilitating the development of cooperative product packages
- developing marketing and distribution channels
- promoting repeat visitation.

About 46% of the adult South African population travelled in 2008, representing a figure of about 14 million domestic tourists.

This was compared to about 13 million domestic tourists in 2007.

Domestic tourism returned revenue of R25,8 billion in 2008, a 17% increase over the previous year.

The average spend per trip increased from R550 in 2007 to R780 in 2008 in nominal terms.

However, a fewer number of trips were undertaken in 2008 compared to the previous year. Domestic trips decreased by 8%, with 32,9 million trips being undertaken compared to 35,9 million in 2007.

Of the country's provinces, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape saw the most domestic tourists in 2008, followed closely by Gauteng and the Western Cape.

International tourism

Cabinet approved the International Tourism Growth Strategy in June 2003, which includes an analysis of core markets and their segments. Priority markets have been identified in Europe, Asia and Africa.

The strategy not only aims to increase arrivals, but also to:

- increase the duration of tourists' visits to South Africa
- increase spending by tourists
- ensure that tourists travel throughout the country and not just in a few provinces
- facilitate transformation and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in the local tourism industry.

South Africa has made its mark as a global destination for the Mice industry.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) identified tourism as an important sector for addressing the development challenges facing Africa. The Nepad Tourism Action Plan has been developed, providing a more detailed framework for action at national and subregional levels. The action plan proposes concrete interventions in the following focus areas:

- creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment
- institution-building aimed at promoting tourism
- tourism marketing
- research and development
- investment in tourism infrastructure and products
- human-resource development (HRD) and quality assurance.

Some of the tourism initiatives South Africa is actively participating in include:

- various tourism spatial development initiatives in the SADC
- developing the SADC univisa, a single visa to cover travel within the region.

Although the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (Retosa) agreement on the need for the univisa exists, the differing levels of development in SADC countries is a challenge that must be overcome first.

South African Tourism

SAT markets South Africa's scenic beauty, diverse wildlife, kaleidoscope of cultures and heritages, the great outdoors, sport and adventure opportunities, ecotourism and conference facilities. The website, www.satour.co.za, offers an online guide to travel in South Africa.

2010 FIFA World Cup™

Some R250 million has been committed to marketing South Africa internationally. The 2010 Tourism Forum has been set up to advise government on tourism-related issues. The tournament is an opportunity to market the country as a tourist destination to countries whose citizens would not normally see South Africa as such, especially South America and Eastern Europe.

The Tourism Branch has engaged with countries that have successfully hosted similar events, to learn from their experiences.

In addition, South Africa together with various other African countries, the United Nations (UN) World Tourism Organisation and FIFA agreed to a programme of work pertaining to hosting a world cup that is African in scope.

The announcement that the 2010 World Cup will, for the first time, feature non-hotel accommodation has tremendous implications for SMME entrepreneurs who run lodges, bed-and-breakfast establishments (B&Bs) and other smaller establishments.

The Department of Tourism is working with Match, the official accommodation partner of the 2010 World Cup, and the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) to assist SMME accommodation establishments and more specifically establishments from previously disadvantaged communities to be graded and registered as official accommodation suppliers for the event. This will provide a vital springboard to these SMMEs.

The number of graded establishments in South Africa almost doubled from 4 604 in 2005 to 8 544 in 2009 and there were nearly 100 000 graded rooms in the country. SAT, in partnership with the International Marketing Council (IMC), FIFA Organising Committee (OC) and other government departments, have been promoting South Africa's readiness to host the World Cup at major international events.

These events included the Euro 2008 Championships in Vienna, and World Travel Market in London and in Berlin. A global marketing campaign to leverage awareness of South Africa as destination through the World Cup was launched at Indaba 2009 and was expected to reach close to a billion viewers globally through global media platforms such as Cable News Network, British Broadcasting Corporation World, Eurosport, Sky Sport and Entertainment Sports Programming Network. Tool kits, which contain all 2010 promotional material for rolling this campaign out globally, have been distributed to all SAT country offices and foreign missions of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

2010 host cities Bloemfontein

Bloemfontein is the judicial capital of South

South Africa is to host a G20 tourism ministers' meeting early in 2010 in response to the global downturn in. Though not immune to the global economic downturn, tourism resisted the financial crisis better than many other sectors, such as construction, real estate and car manufacturing.

South Africa was also elected to the executive council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation in Kazakhstan in October 2009, and will use the position to advance Africa's development agenda.



Africa, the provincial capital of the Free State and the largest urban centre in the Mangaung Local Municipality. Bloemfontein is popularly known as "The City of Roses", owing to the abundance of these flowers and the annual rose festival held there.

Cape Town

Cape Town is known for its beaches, sports, mountain walks, day-trips, wine-tasting, sunsets and fine dining. Cape Town is the provincial capital of the Western Cape and the legislative capital of South Africa. Cape Town is the economic hub of the Western Cape.

Durban

Durban, South Africa's third-largest city in area, is an exciting hub around a busy harbour on the edge of the warm Indian Ocean. The city is well known for its pleasant climate and welcoming beaches. It also boasts top sporting facilities, world-class resorts and nature reserves. To accommodate the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, most of Durban's iconic high-tourist season events have confirmed changed dates or venues, for example the Comrades Marathon will repeat the 2009 down run from Pietermaritzburg to Durban on 30 May 2010.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg lies in Gauteng, the wealthiest province in South Africa. Locals have nicknamed the most populous city in South Africa "Joburg", "Jozi" and "eGoli". The City of Johannesburg is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world with a population of just over three million people.

Nelspruit/Mombela

Nelspruit, the capital city of Mpumalanga, is nestled on the Crocodile River, about 60 km west of Mozambique. Mpumalanga (which means "The Place of the Rising Sun") is the primary gateway to the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park, which stretches over three countries and encompasses global wilderness icons such as the more than 100-year-old Kruger National Park. With its subtropical climate, abundant sunshine and lush covered hills and valleys, Nelspruit forms the ideal base from which to explore Mpumalanga.

Polokwane

Polokwane is the capital city of Limpopo. It is the largest city in the north and a major economic centre. Wide streets, jacaranda trees, colourful

parks and sparkling fountains characterise the city.

Polokwane, which means "A Place of Safety", is situated 60 km south of the Tropic of Capricorn and is home to just over 500 000 people. It encompasses the vibrant communities of Seshego, Mankweng and other surrounding townships.

Port Elizabeth

Port Elizabeth is one of South Africa's important sea ports. The city, the largest in the Eastern Cape, lies on the south-eastern coastline of South Africa. It is known for its sunshine, temperate climate, exhilarating sea breezes and magnificent golden beaches. The city forms part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, which unites Uitenhage and Despatch, and is named after South Africa's former president, humanitarian and world icon, Nelson Mandela, who was born and spent his formative years in the Eastern Cape.

Pretoria

Pretoria's charm lies in its harmonious blend of African roots and European traditions. It is a city where history meets 21st century style and development, where vibrant township scenes complement modern shopping centres. Pretoria is an important industrial centre, with heavy industries, including iron and steel casting as well as automobile, railroad and machinery manufacture.

The city has the second-largest number of embassies in the world after Washington DC.

Rustenburg

Rustenburg is a large town situated at the foot of the Magalies mountain range in North West. Just outside the town are the largest platinum mines in the world and the largest platinum refinery, which processes about 70% of the world's platinum. The town is surrounded by fertile farming land.

Industry transformation

The gazetting of the Tourism Sector Code is a milestone in the process of achieving Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in the tourism industry. The code, which was gazetted on 22 May 2009, was expected to help clarify any uncertainty around BEE targets in tourism and pave the way for real, measurable transformation in the sector.

The gazetting follows a year-long process of alignment between the Tourism BEE Charter and government's codes of good practice, which left the industry with a number of questions related to transformation targets and reporting mechanisms.

The Sector Code provides, in the first five years of reporting, for a greater focus on human-factor elements, namely skills development, strategic representation, employment equity and enterprise development.

The exempt micro-enterprise threshold for the tourism sector has, after a review of inputs from the comment period in 2008, been set at R2,5 million in turnover per year. This step is expected to ensure that all significant stakeholders participate actively in the transformation process.

Two industry-specific indicators have been added, which relate to the ability of the industry to create jobs and to market South Africa as a preferred tourism destination, namely:

- the recruitment of employees with no prior experience
 - the status of the tourism enterprise as a tourism marketing levy for South Africa's levy collector.
- The Tourism Empowerment Council of South Africa, formerly the Tourism BEE Charter Council, is in a position to drive transformation in tourism from a solid foundation and give accurate information that will not be subject to change.

The Sector Code provides for transformation in seven areas of business, namely ownership, strategic representation, employment equity, skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and social development. Each of these indicators will be measured proportionally to a company's compliance with that area.

Infrastructure Development Programme

In May 2008, the former Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the South African National Parks completed the second year of implementation of the Infrastructure Development Programme, for which R541 million was made available over a four-year period. The programme had employed 1 357 people by May 2008. Some 50 SMMEs were empowered and transformation in the construction industry is actively supported. Some highlights include:

- 145 tourism accommodation units were upgraded and many new accommodation units constructed in the various national parks
- 89 upgraded and new staff accommodation units were put in place in various national parks.

Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP)

On 1 April 2008, the newly founded and independent TEP officially took over the management

of a seven-year-old economic development programme (previously known as the Tourism Enterprise Programme), facilitating the growth and development of small and medium-sized tourism businesses in South Africa.

TEP's mission is to facilitate the growth, development and sustainability of tourism enterprises, to enable them to become internationally competitive

Each year, TEP invests millions in the development of small and medium tourism businesses across South Africa. This is achieved through various projects aimed at product development (skills development, access to finance, operational efficiency, quality and service improvement, etc.) and increased provision of market access.

The TEP launched its Hidden Treasures™ concept at Meetings Africa, in February 2009. Hidden Treasures™ is a premier collection of quality craft offerings and experiences that provide visitors

with an authentic taste of South Africa's rich and varied history and culture, such as:

- Andrew Clarke is serving African "gastropub" food in his B Lounge in a once derelict biscuit factory in Salt River that is more than a century old
- 13 people are working in and around Themba Masala's ramshackle home-cum-studio-cum-workshop in Raaswater, Uppington, preparing papier-mâché and wooden items for the international market
- a small museum in Cape Town's Buitenkant Street features telling and touching exhibits on District Six before its destruction.

Hidden Treasures™ creates a unique and memorable encounter that is world-class, yet unmistakably South African.

Crafts, as examples of Hidden Treasures™, are unique, personal, of a quality standard and can be tailor-made to the visitor's needs. They are also innovative and support local crafting businesses around the country. On the other hand, Hidden Treasures™ experiences include artists, performers, tour guides, cuisine offerings, cultural and heritage products that add a unique and authentic flavour to any tourism itinerary.

Once the Hidden Treasure™ clusters are fully developed, South African cities will have their own unique texture and depth. TEP will then "patch" them together into extraordinarily packaged trips.

Tourism Indaba

Indaba 2009, one of the biggest tourism marketing events on the African calendar, took place in May 2009 at the Albert Luthuli Convention Centre in Durban. The event showcased a huge variety of southern Africa's best tourism products, attracting exhibitors and journalists from across the world.

Indaba 2009 drew more than 13 200 delegates, confirming its status as Africa's top travel show and one of the top three in the world. There were 621 journalists in attendance, including 175 from abroad.

The event received the prestigious World Travel Award as Africa's best travel show, while SAT collected a World Travel Award as best destination-marketing organisation on the continent.

Indaba's visitor profile includes adventure, sport, business, incentive group and ecotourism tour operators and agencies, conference organisers, consulting companies, ground handlers, marketing services, online travel outfits and the media.

The Indaba is business-focused and gives opportunities to network with others in the indus-



The 2010 Visitor Information Centre (VIC) was launched in Polokwane in August 2009. The newly constructed, world-class centre was developed at a cost of R8,2 million and will form part of the legacy project for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. Situated on the Great North Road to Zimbabwe, Polokwane is the heart of Limpopo. The city is also the gateway to the other Southern African Development Community countries that lie on its border, offering easy access to Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The model for this centre is based on best international practice and is expected to assist tourism authorities in providing outstanding service to tourists as well as other stakeholders. The centre is aimed at improving the South African tourism offering to enhance service excellence, grow tourism and create opportunities for local economic development.

As part of the national VIC Project, centres are being rolled out in five host cities, namely Port Elizabeth, Polokwane, Nelspruit, Rustenburg and Bloemfontein. These less visited provinces were earmarked for the VICs in preparation for the World Cup, but also to grow their tourism arrivals from both local and international visitors.

The primary objective of the VIC Project is to effectively address the tourism and information needs of the visitors expected to converge on the host cities in 2010 and beyond.

Using international best practice, the Visitor Information Centres Enterprise Network Systems (VICENCYS) was developed to be used at all the information centres. VICENCYS allows users to plan and finalise a travel itinerary by means of touch screens or Web-based technology.

try, combine product offerings and create new itineraries for a market that grows bigger each year.

Meetings Africa

Meetings Africa has established itself as a credible business-tourism marketing platform with the primary objective to showcase South Africa as business-tourism destination internationally and has grown its profile and attendance year on year. It is well regarded in the industry nationally and is building its profile on the international meetings calendar.

This is the only event of its kind in Africa with a specific focus on showcasing products, destinations and support services that fulfil the needs of corporate meeting planners and agents, professional conference organisers, destination-management companies, association-management companies, government and non-governmental organisations. It takes place at the Sandton Convention Centre at the end of February each year.

Human-resource development (HRD)

The Tourism HRD Strategy, which aims to encourage industry players to compete on the basis of excellence in human resources (HR), was launched in 2008. Tourism HRD is considered one of the pil-

lars of the development of a responsible tourism culture in South Africa. In September 2009, the Department of Tourism held the National Tourism Careers Expo.

The Global Travel and Tourism Programme South Africa was established as a stand-alone programme outside of the National Business Initiative (NBI) with effect from 1 October 2009. The NBI managed the programme since 1999 with much success.

Tourism education is an integral part of the South African national curriculum, and learners have an opportunity to become educated about career opportunities in an industry that is vital to the economy.

In 2009, about 2 000 schools delivered the Tourism subject to some 300 000 learners from grades 10 to 12. The NBI had also trained over 1 000 tourism teachers as well as all Tourism subject advisers in the country by 2009.

Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority (Theta)

Theta is the Sector Education and Training Authority (Seta) established under the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998), for the Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Economic Sector. Theta comprises the following chambers:

- Hospitality
- Conservation and Tourist Guiding
- Sport, Recreation and Fitness
- Tourism and Travel Services
- Gaming and Lotteries.

Every chamber has its own committee that helps Theta to identify industry needs.

A Seta's main function is to contribute to the raising of skills, or to bring skills to the employed or those wanting to be employed in their sector. They do this by ensuring that people learn skills that are needed by employers and communities.

Tourism Learnership Project (TLP)

The TLP is a multimillion rand partnership between the Business Trust, Theta and the Department of Labour.

The TLP aims to raise the standards of South Africa's tourism industry by ensuring the development of useful, transferable and accredited skills. The TLP's three core objectives are to:

- accelerate the development of national qualifications for all primary subsectors of the tourism sector
- ensure the availability of national qualifications, which will trigger increased investment in training by employers

At the Local Government Tourism Indaba in Cape Town in March 2009, coastal municipalities deliberated on a new, integrated approach to tap into the multibillion dollar cruise tourism industry. Cruise tourism has immense potential in South Africa, with its pristine coastline, major tourist attractions and the 2010 FIFA World Cup™.

According to research undertaken by *Service-Delivery Magazine*, the global cruise industry doubles every decade but a few organisations control 95% of the industry, with \$22,3 billion being invested in new vessels. In the African region, there were only about 83 cruises aboard 10 vessels with an estimated 31 000 passengers, accounting for only a tiny fraction of the global industry.

To grow the industry, more resources are needed along with a focused and integrated approach by cities. It was decided that a committee, comprising provincial and municipal officials from the four coastal provinces of the Northern Cape, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal and driven by the Department of Tourism, will engage with the National Ports Authority to develop a long-term plan.

Three large cruise ships with thousands of fans aboard will be docked at the Cape Town harbour for the duration of the 2010 World Cup.



- develop systems and support the training of unemployed people through learnerships that provide them with the necessary skills to find jobs.

Tourist guiding

It is estimated that 2010 will require 30 662 guides, at least half of whom should be black. By mid-2007, South Africa had about 10 000 guides, with only 30% black representation. Updating the database of tourist guides and ensuring that it interfaces with provincial structures, is a priority for the Department of Tourism.

The National Pilot Project to curb illegal guiding in South Africa was launched in September 2008. The project intends to curb illegal tourist guiding by unregistered guides and will focus on Gauteng in the pilot phase. The project focuses on increasing registration through positive means such as education and site inspections. With the growth of the industry, it has become apparent that some tour guides are practising illegally, as they are not registered with the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA). Through positive means such as education, consultative workshops and site inspections, the GTA aims to increase compliance of tourist guides with the relevant legislation that governs the industry.

In South Africa, tourist-guiding activities are regulated by the Tourism Second Amendment Act, 2000 (Act 70 of 2000). According to the Act, any person who wishes to be involved in tourist guiding must be registered with the Provincial Registrar for Tourist Guides.

The department has embarked on training of guides in foreign languages. By September 2008, guides had been trained in Mandarin, French, Spanish and German. Training of guides in Portuguese and Chinese was expected to take place soon.

In addition, 108 guides from across the country were expected to embark on training in advanced customer care, communication in English and the Ambassador Programme for host cities.

Research

In May 2009, the Department of Tourism, SAT and a number of partners launched the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA). It makes measurement and tracking a reality and gives the nation and its leaders in both the private and public sector a means by which to accurately determine tourism's contribution to the national economy, and to scenario plan around imperatives such as economic growth and job creation.

The TSA is a UN World Travel Organisation-approved methodology used for measuring and tracking the overall value and contribution of tourism to all sectors of the economy. Findings are the result of extensive and collaborative research by partners and give an accurate account of this growing sector of the economy. Besides tracking the number of tourism jobs created and the contribution to the country's GDP, tourism bodies are also able to tell which activities are most beneficial to the tourist and in effect, to the economy, too.

Hints for tourists

Every traveller to South Africa must have a valid passport and, where necessary, a visa.

The Immigration Act, 2002 (Act 13 of 2002), stipulates that all visitors to South Africa are required to have at least one blank page (both back and front) in their passport to enable the entry visa to be issued. If there is insufficient space in the passport, entry will be denied.

Enquiries may be directed to South African diplomatic representatives abroad or to the Department of Home Affairs in Pretoria. Visas are issued free of charge. Visitors who intend travelling between South Africa and neighbouring countries are advised to apply for multiple-entry visas. Passport-holders of certain countries are exempt from visa requirements.

Tourists must satisfy immigration officers that they have the means to support themselves during their stay and that they have return or onward tickets. They must also have valid international health certificates.

Visitors from the yellow-fever belt in Africa and the United States of America (USA), and those who travel through or disembark in these areas, have to be inoculated against the disease.

Malaria is endemic to parts of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. It is essential to take anti-malaria precautions when visiting these areas. Remote areas in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo are low-risk malaria areas and standard precautions should be taken.

Foreign tourists visiting South Africa can have their value-added tax (VAT) refunded, provided the value of the items purchased exceeds R20.

VAT is refunded on departure at the point of exit.

South Africa's transport infrastructure – airlines, railroads, roads, luxury touring buses (coaches) and motor cars – is such that tourists can travel comfortably and quickly from their port of entry to any part of the country.

A number of international airlines, including South African Airways, operate regular scheduled flights to and from South Africa. Several domestic airlines operate in the country. There are also mainline trains to all parts of the country. (See Chapter 23: *Transport*.)

Accommodation

The tourist-accommodation industry in South Africa provides a wide spectrum of accommodation, from formal hotels to informal holiday flats and cottages, game lodges and reserves, guest houses, youth hostels and B&B establishments.

Some hotels cater for businesspeople and the high-end luxury market, but there are diverse hotels available across the country, ranging from family-centred establishments to international chains, and a growing selection of conference hotels, casino resorts and golf hotels.

There are also spa resorts, numerous options for the budget traveller, and a charming array of B&B accommodation and guest houses. Facilities range from the ultra-luxury to the rustic, but most are noted for their high-quality, personalised service and warm hospitality. Many have restaurants on site.

A variety of promotional material on South Africa is available. Comprehensive guides and maps cover all the regions and aspects of interest to tourists, including accommodation. Various useful tourism websites can be found on the Internet.

Quality assurance

The TGCSA inspects standards in the hospitality and accommodation industry.

South Africa is home to the world's:

- largest land mammal – African elephant
- smallest mammal – a shrew the size of a human fingertip
- tallest mammal – the giraffe
- fastest mammal – cheetah
- heaviest reptile – leatherback turtle
- largest antelope – eland
- heaviest flying bird – kori bustard.

It is also home to:

- 900 bird species – 10% of the world's variety on 1% of its land area
- 6 000 different spiders, 175 varieties of scorpion and 100 different snakes
- 23 200 different fynbos plants, making it the richest zone on Earth in terms of species to area.

Cape Town has earned a stamp of approval from the well-known travel company, Lonely Planet, as one of the world's top 10 party cities. This list is part of Lonely Planet's new guide, the *1 000 Ultimate Experiences*.

According to Lonely Planet, with the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ bringing a global audience to South Africa, the partying will only get harder as travellers converge on a city that is already well known for its nightlife.

The guide advises visitors to try South African wine at a Cape Town bar or one of the wineries in the area. Mossel Bay is also recommended as a party destination.

Other cities included in the top 10 are Belgrade in Serbia, Montreal in Canada, Buenos Aires in Argentina, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and Thessaloniki in Greece.

This voluntary grading system, which was launched in 2001, uses internationally recognised star insignia to rate accommodation establishments and will be extended to include relevant businesses in classified sectors of the tourism industry. Once graded, establishments are encouraged to use the star system for marketing and advertising purposes.

Establishments are assessed according to the type of accommodation they provide. There are currently nine types of establishments:

- B&Bs
- guest houses
- hotels
- self-catering
- backpacker and hostelling
- caravans and camping
- country houses
- meetings, exhibitions and special events
- restaurants.

Grading assessors undergo training to receive the National Certificate in Tourism Grading, a world-first qualification. Assessors are accredited with Theta and registered with the TGCSA before being recommended to the industry.

Larger hotel groups with their own internal assessors are also accredited with Theta. Independent auditors conduct random audits. These auditors also assist in ensuring that the assessors adhere to a code of conduct.

Star grading is the only system recognised by government and the TGCSA.

Star gradings are displayed on most advertising material and at hotel entrances. Participation by hotels is voluntary and indicates a commitment to providing good service and regularly upgrading facilities. Star-graded establishments undergo

annual quality checks to ensure that standards are maintained.

The grading categories are as follows:

- one star – fair to good; modest, clean, comfortable and functional
- two stars – good; quality furnishings, service and guest care
- three stars – very good; better furnishings, service and guest care
- four stars – superior; excellent comfort and very high standard of furnishings, service and guest care
- five stars – exceptional; top-of-the-line quality and luxurious accommodation in line with the best international standards and stringent attention to service.

The TGCSA annually publishes *The Accommodation Guide*.

AA Travel Guide offers another quality check for visitors to South Africa. The AA stamp of approval on promotional material indicates that a venue is highly recommended. Since 1994, the organisation has also been running an annual awards programme based on consumer feedback on some 1 200 AA quality-assured establishments. Qualified assessors visit high-scoring establishments to verify their scores.

The TGCSA was incorporated under SAT as one of its business units in November 2009.

Tourist safety

High-powered plans have been drawn up to reduce violent crimes against tourists, and to support and respect those holidaymakers who do

become victims. The idea is to be proactive and to perform a risk analysis to include vulnerable areas such as airports, convention centres, big events, key tourist sites, routes and activities.

Crime has had a negative impact on the country's growing reputation as a desirable travel destination. However, the Department of Tourism is lobbying and working together with safety and security agencies such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the National Intelligence Agency and the Department of Police.

During 2006, the Tourism Branch established a task team to assist in developing the National Tourism Safety and Awareness Strategy. All nine provinces are represented on the task team.

Agencies such as the IMC have also been identified to help counter international perceptions about crime.

As part of its efforts to combat crime, the SAPS holds joint operations committee meetings with stakeholders at provincial level. A range of stakeholders attend these planning meetings, which previously did not include tourism stakeholders.

The Tourism Safety and Awareness Strategy involves proactive and support measures. A booklet containing safety tips for tourists has been revised and was distributed at the Tourism Indaba.

The department, together with the SAPS, is working on the *Tourism Safety and Awareness Handbook for Practitioners*.

Tourism in the provinces Western Cape

The Western Cape lies at the southern tip of Africa. The province is considered one of the most beautiful regions in Africa; it is also the place where two oceans meet and the home of the famous fynbos vegetation.

The paternal presence of Table Mountain, the pristine coastline with its white sandy beaches, the magnificent countryside with its bountiful rivers, vleis and dams, fauna and flora, together with the warm summer climate and friendly community make the Western Cape the perfect holiday destination.

The Western Cape is South Africa's most developed tourism region. The tourism industry in the province has grown faster and created more jobs than any other industry. One in 10 employees in the Western Cape earns a living in the tourism industry and it contributes more than R25 billion to the provincial economy.

The province received 1,63 million international arrivals in 2008. The amount spent by foreign tour-

The Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (Retosa) approved a strategic plan in October 2009, which is aimed at addressing challenges faced by the region in developing and growing tourism. Retosa is responsible for the promotion and marketing of tourism in 14 southern African countries and its mandate is to leverage tourism as a major economic driver for the region.

The participating Southern African Development Community countries are Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Some of the initiatives highlighted in the strategic plan to address challenges in tourism development include, among other things, the opportunity provided by the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations in Angola, the 2011 All Africa Games in Mozambique and relaunching the King's Golf Cup in Swaziland in 2010.



ists showed an increase of 16,2% from R17,9 billion in 2007 to R20,8 billion in 2008. Visitors from abroad are staying longer and spending more.

Cape Metropole

Tourism in the city of Cape Town centres around the Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront, a working harbour offering everything from upmarket shopping malls, arts and craft markets, theatres and live music to museums.

Other major attractions in the city include the Bo-Kaap Museum, the Castle of Good Hope, the Company's Garden, the District Six Museum, flea markets, the Grand Parade, the houses of Parliament, the South African Cultural History Museum and the South African National Gallery. Also worth a visit are historical buildings in the Bo-Kaap and District Six.

The Gold of Africa Museum, established by Anglo Gold, houses a celebrated collection of more than 350 gold artefacts.

Air flips and trips are available, as are many boat and yacht trips from Table Bay Harbour, including trips to Robben Island (proclaimed a world heritage site and also the place where former President Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 of his 27 years in prison).

The Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island is in the Clock Tower Precinct at the V&A Waterfront. The gateway houses interactive multimedia exhibitions, an auditorium, boardrooms, the Robben Island Museum and a restaurant.

Jazz is big in Cape Town. From traditional blues through progressive jazz to African-influenced jazz, every taste is catered for at a number of restaurants, jazz cafés, cigar bars, pubs and wine farms. The top jazz event in the Western Cape is the annual Cape Town International Jazz Festival.

Table Mountain, which forms part of the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), is a popular attraction for visitors and provides a majestic backdrop to the vibrant and friendly Mother City. An ultra-modern cableway takes visitors to the top of the mountain, providing spectacular views.

Newlands is home to the renowned Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. In summer, various open-air concerts are held here.

The South African Rugby Museum in Newlands reflects the history of the sport as far back as 1891.

The Rhodes Memorial in Rondebosch is on the slopes of Table Mountain. It was built of granite from the mountain as a tribute to the memory of Cecil John Rhodes, prime minister of the Cape from 1890 to 1896. The University of Cape Town

is worth a visit for its historic Middle Campus and many buildings designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

Cape Point, part of the TMNP, offers many drives, walks, picnic spots and a licensed restaurant. Care has been taken to protect the environmental integrity of this 22 100-ha reserve of indigenous flora and fauna.

Simon's Town's naval atmosphere and Historic Mile are major attractions in the area. A statue of the famous dog and sailor's friend, Able Seaman Just Nuisance, stands at Jubilee Square.

Other attractions include the South African Naval Museum and the Warrior Toy Museum. One of only two of the mainland African penguin-breeding colonies in the world can be found at Boulders Beach, also part of the TMNP.

Hout Bay is well known for its colourful working harbour. Seafood outlets, round-the-bay trips to the nearby seal colony, shell and gift shops, and a famous harbour-front emporium attract many visitors. Duiker Island is a seal and sea-bird sanctuary. The World of Birds Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the largest bird parks in the world and houses some 3 000 birds.

In Oostenberg, visitors can enjoy some fine wine and flower farms, such as Zevenwacht Wine Estate with its graceful Cape Dutch homestead. Tygerberg Zoo boasts a collection of exotic animals.

Endless stretches of quiet beaches provide popular surfing and windsurfing spots. Big Bay in Bloubergstrand is a surfer's paradise and host to an international windsurfing event. Rietvlei Nature

The New7Wonders Foundation in Zurich, Switzerland, announced the top 28 wonders from around the world in July 2009. The finalists include legendary sites such as the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Grand Canyon in the United States of America and the Amazon in South America.

Table Mountain made it into the final round of the New7-Wonders of Nature contest and is competing for a place among the top seven wonders to be announced in 2011. Table Mountain is one of only two African sites to have made the prestigious list, along with Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Candidates in the Official New7Wonders of Nature Campaign are clearly defined natural sites that have neither been created by nor significantly altered by humans for aesthetic reasons.

The New7Wonders of Nature Campaign aims to raise awareness of the incredible variety and beauty of nature around us.



Reserve is a unique wetland area, with over 110 bird species, including pelicans and flamingos.

Canal Walk Century City is one of the largest shopping centres in Africa, with close to 400 shops, and is home to the largest cinema complex in South Africa.

Tygerberg is a vibrant and fast-growing area with a well-developed business centre, numerous sports fields, an international indoor-cycle track, well-kept golf courses and a racecourse.

New Year in Cape Town is a festive affair, when the Cape minstrels take to the streets with their upbeat music and fancy costumes.

Garden Route

A new multimillion-rand development on South Africa's Garden Route, which is expected to turn the region into a major global tourism and business hub, was unveiled in November 2009.

Known as the Destiny Africa Ecosphere Project, the R28-billion initiative will stand on 437 ha just outside the town of George, located at the eastern end of the Western Cape and in the centre of the Garden Route. The popular Garden Route spans roughly 200 km of South Africa's southern coast.

The Destiny Africa Project will combine business, learning and leisure into a so-called smart city. Components include a top-class conference centre, a business park with an incubator, a university cluster and research centre, about 7 000 residential units, ecotourism and medical tourism facilities, retail opportunities and a waterfront. These interconnected facilities are known as an ecosphere.

Construction could take up to 17 years and will result in at least 50 000 new jobs, both directly and indirectly. The project centres on the Mice concept, which forms the core of sustainable business tourism.

For its small area, the Garden Route is the most biodiverse region in the world.

The Garden Route features the pont at Malgas, which is the only remaining pont in the country, ferrying vehicles and livestock across the Breede River.

Whale-watching attracts tourists at Witsand and Port Beaufort from June to November.

The Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve outside Heidelberg comprises the popular Bushbuck Trail, a wilderness trail and two mountain-bike trails.

Riversdale is one of South Africa's most important fynbos export areas. Other attractions include the Julius Gordon Africana Museum.

At the historical Strandveld Architectural Heritage Site at Still Bay, visitors can watch tame eels

being fed. Ancient fish-traps can be seen at Morris Point and the harbour.

At the aloe factories at Albertinia, aloe juice is extracted for medicine and high-quality skin-care products.

Nearby, bungee-jumping at the Gouritz River Gorge, hiking, mountain-biking and angling are popular pastimes.

The Point in Mossel Bay is not only popular among surfers, but its natural pool formed by rock is also a favourite swimming spot at low tide. The St Blaize trail starts here and is the ideal place from which to watch the whales and dolphins at play in season.

The harbour at Mossel Bay is one of the most modern commercial and recreational harbours on the southern Cape coastline. PetroSA's Information Centre informs visitors about the production of synthetic fuels from Mossel Bay's offshore gas fields. Other attractions include the Atteguas Kloof Pass, Anglo-Boer/South African War blockhouses and the Bartolomeu Dias complex.

Great Brak River offers a historic village with many opportunities for whale- and dolphin-watching along the extensive coast.

George is a historically significant location, with features such as the 198-year-old Old Slave Tree, which is a national monument. This huge oak tree is so named because of the chain and lock embedded near the bottom of its trunk. It is not certain if the chain is linked to slavery, or was used merely to prevent things from being stolen.

George is at the heart of the Garden Route. It is the mecca of golf in the southern Cape, as it is home to the renowned Fancourt Country Club and Golf Estate, as well as various other acclaimed golf courses. Board the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe on its daily trip along the coastline between George and Knysna (except Sundays) at the Outeniqua Transport Museum.

Visitors can also board the Power Van here, and enjoy a glimpse of the Garden Route Botanical Garden from this rail bus.

The George Museum, with its theme of timber history, offers ongoing exhibitions. The Montagu and Voortrekker passes are national monuments, providing spectacular views of the Outeniqua Nature Reserve, which offers several hiking trails.

The George Airport, the Outeniqua Pass, the railway line and the N2 offer convenient access to this region, making George the ideal hub from which to explore the Garden Route and Little Karoo. Victoria Bay and Wilderness are popular for their unspoilt beaches. Wilderness is the western

gateway to the southern Cape lakes area. It is a nature lover's paradise, best known for its beaches, lakes, placid lagoon and lush indigenous forests. Birdwatchers flock to the Langvlei and Rondevlei bird sanctuaries in the Wilderness National Park, which hosts over 230 different bird species.

Sedgefield borders Swartvlei Lagoon, the largest natural inland saltwater lake in South Africa. Activities include beach horse-riding, hiking, angling and birdwatching.

Knysna nestles on the banks of an estuary, guarded by The Heads (two huge sandstone cliffs) and surrounded by indigenous forests, tranquil lakes and golden beaches.

This natural wonderland is home to the largest and smallest of creatures, from the Knysna seahorse to the Knysna elephants, rare delicate butterflies and the endemic Knysna loerie, a colourful forest bird. Over 200 species can be found in the abundant fynbos and forest settings.

Knysna is also famous for its delectable home-grown oysters, enjoyed with locally brewed beer in quaint pubs and restaurants. The Knysna Oyster Festival, a celebration of the good life, has established itself as one of the most popular annual events in the Western Cape. An eclectic mix of art galleries showcases the diversity of talent in the area. There are also lagoon cruises, forest hikes, golf and adventure sports on offer.

Plettenberg Bay is adventure country, offering boat-based whale-watching, black-water tubing, hiking, and forest and cycling trails.

The Keurbooms River Nature Reserve at Plettenberg Bay offers a canoeing trail, while the Robberg Nature Reserve is a treasure trove of land, marine, geological and archaeological wealth.

At 216-m high, the bungee jump from the Bloukrans River Bridge on the border between the Western and Eastern Cape is the highest commercial bungee jump in the world.

Little Karoo

The Little Karoo's spectacular landscape is fashioned almost entirely by water. Its vegetation ranges from lush greenery in the fertile river valleys to short, rugged Karoo plants in the veld. Gorges feature rivers that cut through towering mountains, while breathtakingly steep passes cross imposing terrain. The region is also home to the largest bird in the world – the ostrich. The Little Karoo is rich in culture and history.

Excellent wines and port are produced in the Calitzdorp and De Rust areas. The Swartberg Nature Reserve and Pass with their gravel roads are also worth a visit. Oudtshoorn, the world's

ostrich-feather capital, is the region's main town. The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees is held in the town annually. Some 29 km from Oudtshoorn lie the remarkable Congo caves, a series of spectacular subterranean limestone caverns. Bearing evidence of early San habitation, the 30-cave wonderland boasts magnificent dripstone formations. Amalienstein and Zoar are historic mission stations midway between Ladismith and Calitzdorp. Visitors can go on donkey-cart and hiking trails through orchards and vineyards, while the Seweweekspoort is ideal for mountain-biking, hiking, and protea and fynbos admirers.

Calitzdorp has four wine estates, three of which are open to the public. The spring water of the Calitzdorp Spa is rich in minerals and reputed to have medicinal properties. The Gamka Mountain Reserve is home to the rare and endangered Cape mountain zebra.

De Rust lies at the southern entrance to Meiringspoort. The Meiringspoort Gorge extends 20 km through the Swartberg Mountain Range. Halfway through is a beautiful 69 m-high waterfall. Wine farms in the area are open to the public.

Ladismith is home to the Towerkop Cheese Factory. There are various hiking, mountain-biking and 4x4 trails in the area, as well as the Anysberg, Klein Karoo and Towerkop nature reserves.

Uniondale, on the main route between George and Graaff-Reinet, features the largest waterwheel in the country, the Old Watermill. Uniondale Poort is a scenic drive linking Uniondale with Avontuur in the Langkloof Valley.

At Vanwyksdorp, visitors can see how fynbos is dried and packed for the export market. Donkey-cart rides take visitors to Anglo-Boer/South African War grave sites.

Central Karoo

The Central Karoo, a fascinating semi-desert area, lies in the heart of one of the world's most unique and interesting arid zones.

This ancient, fossil-rich land, which is five times the size of Great Britain, is also home to the richest desert flora in the world.

In the Central Karoo, visitors will find the largest variety of succulents found anywhere on Earth.

Beaufort West, the oldest town in the Central Karoo, is often referred to as the "Oasis of the Karoo". The local museum displays awards presented to heart-transplant pioneer, the late Prof. Chris Barnard, a son of this town.

A township route introduces visitors to the Xhosa culture in the area. At the Karoo National Park on the town's doorstep, visitors can expe-

rience the flora and game of the Karoo. A challenging 4x4 route takes them to the escarpment and new areas of ecological discovery. The park is also home to a variety of game, as well as the highly endangered riverine rabbit.

Matjiesfontein, a national monument, offers tourists a peek into yesteryear and the opportunity to overnight in Victorian splendour. The village houses a transport museum and the Marie Rawdon Museum. Next to the transport museum is a large field on which the first international cricket match was played in South Africa.

Experience the vastness of the Great Karoo in Murraysburg, an ecotourist and hunter's paradise.

Laingsburg, a tiny village almost totally wiped out by floods a century after it was established, is the best place to study the geology of the region.

Prince Albert is a well-preserved town at the foot of the Swartberg mountains. It is the ideal place to sample a great variety of Karoo cuisine. See examples of local architecture dating back to the early 1800s, and enjoy several scenic drives.

The Fransie Pienaar Museum introduces visitors to the cultural history of the area. It has a fossil room and an exhibit covering the gold rush in this area in the 19th century. The museum has a licence to distil and sell "witblits" (white lightning). Prince Albert is the closest town by road to Gamkaskloof.

The Hell, a little valley in the heart of the Swartberg mountains, was the home of one of the world's most isolated communities for almost 150 years. Today, Gamkaskloof is a nature reserve and national monument managed by Cape Nature Conservation. It has overnight facilities and can be accessed by a 57-km long (but two-hour-drive) winding road which starts at the peak of the Swartberg Pass.

Cape winelands

The Cape winelands, including the former Breede River Valley, are close to Cape Town. The Cape winelands feature dramatic mountains, rolling farmlands and peaceful vineyards. They are home to Route 62, the world's longest wine route.

Stellenbosch, the oldest town in South Africa, is also known as the "Eikestad" (City of Oaks). Various historical walks delight visitors. The town is a gracious blend of old Cape Dutch, Georgian and Victorian architecture. Dorp Street consists of one of the longest rows of old buildings in the country. The Stellenbosch Village Museum consists of four homesteads and gardens ranging from the late-17th to the middle-19th centuries.

The Spier Summer Arts Festival livens up sultry summer nights from November to March at the Spier Wine Estate near Stellenbosch. The Stellenbosch Wine Route comprises over 100 wine estates, most of which offer cellar tours.

The Freedom Monument at Pniel, which was built in 1992, commemorates the freed slaves who were the first settlers at the mission station, established in 1843.

Franschhoek has become known as the "Gourmet Capital" of the Cape. Originally known as Oliphantshoek, it was renamed after the arrival of Huguenots who were predominantly French. The Huguenot Monument was built in 1944 to commemorate their arrival in 1688.

Visitors can also enjoy various hiking trails and historical walks, as well as the *Vignerons de Franschhoek* Wine Route.

Paarl lies between the second-largest granite rock in the world and the Du Toit's Kloof mountains. It is famous for its Cape Dutch and Victorian architectural treasures found along a 1-km stretch of the main street. The area's fynbos vegetation supports a number of south-western Cape endemics, such as the Cape sugarbird and the orange-breasted sunbird.

The Afrikaanse Taalmonument is situated on the slopes of the Paarl Mountain, while the Afrikaanse Taalmuseum is in the centre of the town.

The town of Wellington lies in a picturesque valley, with the majestic Hawequa mountains on its eastern border. Apart from three renowned cooperative wineries, one can visit several prestigious wine cellars situated on historic Huguenot farms with Cape Dutch homesteads. More than 90% of South Africa's vine-cutting nurseries are found in Wellington. The town is also the home of South Africa's dried-fruit industry.

Experience life as the pioneers lived in years gone by at the Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum. The KVV Brandy Cellar, the largest of its kind in the world, offers cellar tours and brandy tastings.

Tulbagh is famous for its heritage, historical homesteads and magnificent country living. Church Street, home to 32 national monuments, constitutes the largest concentration of national monuments in one street in South Africa.

Ceres, named after the Roman goddess of fruitfulness, is the largest deciduous fruit-producing region in South Africa. Tours are offered at various fruit farms. The area also offers several 4x4 trails, horse-riding, mountain-biking and abseiling.

The Hex River Valley is the largest producer of table grapes in southern Africa. Visitors can pick

their own grapes at harvest time and can sample the variety of export-quality produce.

The well-known Hex River 4x4 trail and the Ochre San rock art trails are a must for nature lovers. De Doorns is situated in the heart of the Hex River Valley. Situated on the Breede River, Bonnievale features several cheese factories. For the adventurous outdoor enthusiast there are canoe trips, birdwatching and riverboating.

Known as "The Valley of Wine and Roses", Robertson is one of the most beautiful areas in South Africa. Surrounded by vineyards, orchards, delectable fruit and radiant roses, Robertson produces connoisseur-quality wines and is also known for its thoroughbred horses.

Renowned for its muscadel wines, Montagu is the gateway to the Klein Karoo and set in a fertile valley. Relax in the healing waters of the Avalon springs or visit the Montagu Museum, which houses, among other things, original cartoons and books by TO Honiball.

The area also offers several hiking trails, game-viewing drives, guided cultural tours and excellent rock climbs.

The picturesque village of Gouda is renowned for the Parrotts Den Pub, a living museum in the Gouda Hotel.

McGregor has a wealth of fascinating white-washed, thatched cottages and well-preserved Victorian houses, making it one of the best-preserved examples of mid-19th century architecture in the Western Cape.

Prince Alfred Hamlet is the gateway to the Gydo Pass, known for its scenic views. This quaint village lies in an important deciduous-fruit farming area.

Hidden amid vineyards and wine estates lies the picturesque town of Rawsonville, renowned for its array of award-winning wines. Tourists can enjoy an afternoon drive along the awe-inspiring Slanghoek Valley, with its lush vineyards and breathtaking views, or relax in the warm-water mineral springs at Goudini Spa.

West Coast

The West Coast is a region of extreme beauty and contrast. The solitary coast's scenic beauty is challenged only by rich culinary experiences of mussels, oysters, calamari, crayfish and abalone in season, or linefish pulled from the Benguela current's cold waters. The area is a birdwatcher's paradise. In addition, every year migrating whales visit the coastal waters from July.

Within two months of the first good winter rains, wild flowers on the West Coast explode in

a brilliant array of colour. The Swartland region is known for its undulating wheat fields, vineyards, wineries and outdoor activities. Further north, visitors encounter the fertile Olifants River Valley and the vast plains of the Knersvlakte with their wealth of indigenous succulent plants.

The town of Darling draws visitors to its country museum and art gallery, annual wild flower and orchid shows, basket factory and wine cellars. The entertainment venue Evita se Perron is situated at the old Darling Railway Station and offers top entertainment from South African entertainers.

Malmesbury is the biggest town in the Swartland. Major attractions include the Malmesbury Museum and the historical walk-about.

The Riebeek Valley is known for its scenic beauty. The area has become a popular haven for well-known artists of various disciplines. Wines and olives can be tasted at various cellars.

Elands Bay is a popular holiday resort and surfer's paradise. Khoi and San rock art can be viewed at the Elands Bay caves.

Moorreesburg and Koringberg are major wheat-distributing towns. Tourists can visit the Wheat Industry Museum, one of only three in the world. Birdwatching, hiking, 4x4 routes, clay-pigeon shooting, mountain-bike trails, canoeing and waterskiing at Misverstand are popular activities.

Yzerfontein is famous for its unspoilt beaches, fynbos, beautiful views and whale-watching. Another major attraction is the historical lime furnaces.

Langebaan is a popular holiday destination. The West Coast National Park, an internationally renowned wetland that houses about 60 000 waterbirds and waders, attracts thousands of visitors each year. The park is also the site where the oldest anatomically modern fossilised human footprints were discovered.

The Langebaan Lagoon forms part of the park and is zoned for specific activities. The Postberg section of the park, across the lagoon, is famous for its wild flowers that bloom mainly during August and September.

Cape Columbine at Paternoster is the last manned lighthouse on the South African coast. The Columbine Nature Reserve is home to many seabird species.

Saldanha is a watersports enthusiast's paradise. Its attractions include Doc's Cave, a landmark on the scenic breakwater drive, and the Hoedjieskoppie Nature Reserve. There are various hiking trails in the SAS Saldanha Nature Reserve.



The Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve, in the Western Cape's Cederberg mountains, was rated the world's best hotel in 2009 by *Travel&Leisure* magazine. Some rooms in the five-star Bushmans Kloof have private swimming pools, outdoor showers, flat-screen TVs, DVD and CD collections, iPod docking stations and underfloor heating.

It scored 98,7 points. Bushmans Kloof, set on a 7 500-ha reserve 270 km north of Cape Town, has received many accolades, including the 2007 *Relais and Chateaux* Environment Trophy for its environmental and conservation projects.

Magazine readers voted on criteria such as the quality of the rooms, facilities, location, service, restaurants, food and value for money.

South Africa has three other hotels in the publication's top 15, namely Mpumalanga's Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, which was placed third, Singita Sabi Sands, which came sixth, and Cape Town's Twelve Apostles, at number 15.

St Helena Bay is best known for the Vasco Da Gama Monument and Museum. Fishing (snoek in season), hiking and whale and birdwatching opportunities also draw many visitors.

Vredenburg, the business centre of the area, has a popular golf course with a bird hide where various species can be viewed.

Lambert's Bay is a traditional fishing village, with Bird Island as a tourist attraction. It is a breeding ground for African penguins, the Cape cormorant and other sea birds. Visitors can also watch southern right whales here from July to November.

Piketberg offers arts and crafts, fauna and flora, wine culture and recreation. The Goedverwacht and Wittewater Moravian mission stations are close to the town.

Porterville is famous for its Disa Route (best in January and February). The Groot Winterhoek Mountain Peak in the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area is the second-highest in the Western Cape. The Dasklip Pass is popular with hang-gliders.

At Velddrif/Laaipele, visitors can indulge in bokkems (a West Coast salted-fish delicacy) at factories along the Berg River. Tourists can also visit the salt-processing factory and the West Coast Art Gallery in town.

The citrus area in the Olifants River Valley is the third-largest in South Africa. The wine route from Citrusdal to Lutzville produces a selection of internationally acclaimed wines. The world-renowned rooibos tea is also produced here.

Citrusdal is famous for its citrus products and wines. The Citrusdal Museum depicts the

pioneering days of the early colonists. The Goede Hoop Citrus Co-op is the largest single packing facility in South Africa. The annual Citrusdal Outdoor Calabash features, among other things, 4x4 outings, lectures and visits to rock-art sites, and an arts and crafts market.

The oldest orange tree in the country, calculated to be more than 250 years old, grows in the Citrusdal Valley. The Sandveldhuisie is a recently built example of a typical Sandveld dwelling. There are several recognised mountain-biking, walking, hiking and canoeing trails and a sky-diving club.

Annually, scores of sky-diving enthusiasts visit Citrusdal for a skydiving "boogie" that lasts several days.

The Cederberg Wilderness Area features the elephant's foot plant, the rare snow protea and some of the best examples of San rock art in the Western Cape.

Visitors to Clanwilliam can visit the rooibos and velskoen factories and the grave of the well-known South African poet Louis Leipoldt. Various historical buildings can also be viewed. The Clanwilliam and Bulshoek dams are popular among watersports enthusiasts.

Wuppertal, at the foot of the Cederberg mountains, features the oldest Rhenish Mission Station. Proceeds from 4x4 trails in the area fund the creation of new hiking trails and the building of more overnight huts and guest houses.

Vredendal is the centre of the Lower Olifants River Valley. Major attractions include marble-processing and manufacturing, industrial mines (dolomite and limestone), the KVV Grape Juice Concentrate Plant and Distillery and the South African Dried Fruit Cooperative. The town is also home to the Vredendal Wine Cellar, the largest cooperative wine cellar under one roof in the southern hemisphere.

The picturesque town of Doringbaai with its attractive lighthouse is well known for its seafood.

Strandfontein, about 8 km north of Doringbaai, is essentially a holiday and retirement resort with a breathtaking view of the ocean.

Klawer was named after the wild clover growing in the area. During the flower season, the area is a kaleidoscope of colour. There are hiking trails as well as river-rafting along the Doring River.

Lutzville and Koekenaap are synonymous with wine and flowers in season.

Visitors can also view the Sishen-Saldanha Railway Bridge. Where the railway line spans the Olifants River, it is divided into 23 sections, each 45 m long. The 14 100-ton deck was pushed into

position over teflon sheets with hydraulic jacks from the bridgehead. It is the longest bridge in the world built using this method.

Vanrhynsdorp houses the largest succulent nursery in South Africa. The Latsky Radio Museum houses a collection of old valve radios, some dating back to 1924. Birdwatching, mountain-biking, day walks, and hiking and 4x4 trails abound. The Troe-Troe and Rietpoort mission stations are a must-see for historians.

Overberg

In the most southerly region of Africa, just over an hour's drive east of Cape Town, lies a fertile area surrounded by mountains and sea, called the Overberg.

The Hangklip-Kleinmond area comprises Kleinmond, Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay and Rooiels. It is a popular holiday region, ideal for whale-watching, and includes the Kleinmond Coastal Nature Reserve and the Harold Porter Botanical Garden.

The Penguin Reserve at Stoney Point, Betty's Bay, is one of two breeding colonies of the jackass penguin on the African continent.

South Africa's first international biosphere reserve, the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, was proclaimed by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in 1999. It runs along the coast from Gordon's Bay to the Bot River Vlei, stretching 2 km out to sea, and inland to the Groenlandberg mountains near Grabouw.

Hermanus is a popular holiday resort, famous for the best land-based whale-watching in the world.

Stanford is one of the few villages in South Africa where the market square has been retained. The central core of the village has been proclaimed a national conservation area. Award-winning wines are produced in the area.

Gansbaai is known for its excellent rock and boat angling, diving, shark-cage diving and whale-watching. The Danger Point Lighthouse, named as such because of the ships that have been wrecked and lives that have been lost on this dangerous coast, is open to the public.

De Kelders is the only freshwater cave on the African coast. Spectacular views of southern right whales can be enjoyed from the cliffs at De Kelders and along the coast to Pearly Beach. Also popular are white-shark tours, diving safaris and fishing trips.

Elim was founded by German missionaries in 1824, with its only inhabitants being members of the Moravian Church. Visitors are welcome to

attend services. The Old Watermill (1833) has been restored and declared a national monument.

Popular sites in Napier include the Militaria Museum and Rose Boats and Toy Museum. The Shipwreck Museum in Bredasdorp, founded in 1975, specialises in shipwrecks found along the South African coastline. The town also boasts the Audrey Blignault Museum.

De Mond Nature Reserve is home to some rare bird species, including the damara tern and giant tern.

The Geelkop Nature Reserve derives its name from the mass of yellow flowering plants that cover the hill during spring.

The lighthouse at L'Agulhas, which forms part of the Agulhas National Park, is the country's second-oldest working lighthouse. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1999.

The Agulhas National Park, home to a rich and diverse plant population, boasts more than 110 *Red Data Book* species. Among these are the endangered Cape platanna and microfrog, and rare coastal birds such as the African oystercatcher. The damara tern finds the area ideal for breeding.

At Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of the continent, the waters are cleaved into the Indian and Atlantic oceans. The wrecks of some 130 seafaring craft – yachts, Spanish galleons, Dutch East Indiamen, the legendary Birkenhead, and even modern-day fishing trawlers – have found a watery grave around the notorious Cape of Storms.

Struisbaai has the longest white coastline in the southern hemisphere.

Arniston was named Waenhuiskrans (coach-house cliff) by the local fishers in honour of the huge sea cave capable of housing several ox-wagons. For outsiders, it was named after the *Arniston*, a ship wrecked there in 1815. The Waenhuiskrans Cave can be explored at low tide.

The De Hoop Nature Reserve on the way to Swellendam includes an internationally renowned wetland and bird sanctuary. It is a winter retreat for the southern right whale and the Western Cape's only Cape griffen vulture colony.

The red Bredasdorp lily and many species of protea and erica are found in the Heuningberg Nature Reserve.

Swellendam is well known for its youngberries and eclectic architecture. The Drostdy Museum consists of a group of buildings containing a huge selection of period furniture. The Bontebok National Park, about 7 km from Swellendam,

provides sanctuary to the threatened bontebok and other species.

Known for its world-class wine, Barrydale offers the visitor fruit and fresh air in abundance.

Situated on the N2, about 160 km from Cape Town, Riviersonderend offers beautiful mountain and river scenery, a nine-hole golf course and sightings of the blue crane.

Caledon is famous for its natural mineral waters, hot springs and wild-flower shows. Southern Associated Maltsters is the only malt producer for the South African lager beer industry and the largest in the southern hemisphere.

Genadendal is the oldest Moravian village in Africa, with church buildings and a school dating back to 1738. The Genadendal Mission and Museum Complex documents the first mission station in South Africa.

The Theewaterskloof Dam outside Villiersdorp is the seventh-largest dam in the country. The Villiersdorp Wild Flower Garden and Nature Reserve has an indigenous herb garden and a reference library.

The Grabouw/Elgin district produces about 60% of South Africa's total apple exports and fine wines. The valley is also renowned for cultivating fresh chrysanthemums, roses and proteas. The Elgin Apple Museum is one of only two in the world. Sir Lowry's Pass offers spectacular views of False Bay from Gordon's Bay to Cape Point.

Northern Cape

Characterised by its vast expanses of space and silence, blazing summer sunshine and interesting and friendly people, the Northern Cape is a province rich with culture.

Diamond fields

The Big Hole in Kimberley is the largest hand-dug excavation in the world. In 1871, diamonds were discovered at the site and mined manually by prospectors. The Kimberley Tram Service dates back to the beginning of the 20th century and still transports passengers from the City Hall to the Mine Museum.

Underground mine tours are a big attraction, as are the famous ghost tours, during which many historical buildings are seen from a different perspective. Hand and mechanical diamond-digging by private diggers can be viewed by appointment.

The McGregor Museum houses invaluable collections of the archaeological finds in the area, as well as San art works. The house where Sol Plaatje (African National Congress founding member and

human-rights activist) lived in Kimberley, boasts a library of Plaatje's and other black South African writers' works, and several displays, including a portrayal of black involvement in the Anglo-Boer/South African War.

The Paterson Museum near the Kimberley Airporthouses a replica of a Paterson biplane, which was used for pilot training by the flying school operated by the Paterson Aviation Syndicate at Alexandersfontein. A township tour of Galeshewe provides a fresh perspective on South Africa's socio-historical realities. Pan African Congress founder Robert Sobukwe's house is situated there.

The Magersfontein Battlefield outside Kimberley, with its original trenches and other defences intact, is the site of the Boers' crushing defeat of the British during the Siege of Kimberley. A cultural centre at Wildebeestkuil outside Kimberley features !Xun and Khwe artwork for sale and a tour of rock engravings by these indigenous people.

A short distance from Kimberley is the mining town of Barkley West, which, owing to its proximity to the Vaal River, is a favourite spot for many water-sports enthusiasts and anglers.

Tucked along the Vaal River near Barkley West lies the Vaalbos National Park. The park is not only home to large raptors, but is also a breeding centre for endangered African herbivores such as rhino, roan and sable antelope and disease-free buffalo.

Kalahari

At Black Rock, visitors have the opportunity to view a worked-out manganese mine.

Danielskuil lies at the foot of the Kuruman hills. The Tswana people occupied the area before it became home to the Griquas. Boesmansgat, on the farm Mount Carmel outside Danielskuil, is a unique natural sinkhole – the second-deepest and largest of its kind in the world.

Known as the "Oasis of the Kalahari", Kuruman is blessed with a permanent and abundant source of water that flows from Gasegonyana (Tswana for "the little water calabash") – commonly called the "Eye of Kuruman".

Moffat's Mission in Kuruman is a tranquil place featuring the house of missionary Robert Moffat, the church he built, and several other buildings. Moffat translated the Bible into Setswana – the first African language in which the Bible was made accessible.

The printing press on which he printed the first 2 000 copies can still be viewed. The church he

built seats 800 people and is still in use. David Livingstone married Moffat's daughter and started many famous travels from this mission station.

The Wonderwerk Cave at Kuruman features extensive San paintings that may be viewed by appointment.

The Kalahari Raptor Centre cares for injured birds. Many of these majestic creatures can be seen at close quarters. Another marvel is the Wit-sand Nature Reserve, situated about 80 km south-west of Postmasburg, which features a 100-m high dune of brilliant white sand. It stretches for about 9 km and is about 2 km wide.

Green Kalahari

The roaring sands on the farm Doornaar near Groblershoop are an interesting site. The white dunes, surrounded by typically red Kalahari dunes, are said to "roar" when the wind blows.

Eleven waterwheels are still used today along the hand-built irrigation canals at Kakamas.

Kanoneiland is a settlement on the biggest island in the Orange River.

At Keimoes, the Orange River flows at its widest. The Tierberg Nature Reserve offers spectacular views of the Keimoes Valley and the many islands in the Orange River. The original irrigation canal system is still in use. The Orange River Wine Cellars largest cellar is situated here.

Kenhardt is the oldest town in the Lower Orange River area. The Quiver Tree Forest and Kokerboom Hiking Trail, consisting of between 4 000 and 5 000 quiver trees, are within easy driving distance of the town. Upington is the commercial, educational and social centre of the Green Kalahari, owing its prosperity to agriculture and its irrigated lands along the Orange River. A camel-and-rider statue in front of the town's police station pays tribute to the "mounties", who patrolled the harsh desert territory on camels.

The Orange River displays its impressive power at the Au-grabies Falls, also known as the "Place of Great Noise", in the Au-grabies Falls National Park. Visitors can hire canoes to ensure closer contact with the natural heritage surrounding the world's sixth-largest waterfall.

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park comprises 38 000 m² of land, making it one of the largest conservation areas in the world. Straddling the Green Kalahari and Botswana, the park is a two-million-ha sanctuary for various raptors, antelope, gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, eland, Kalahari lion, black-maned lion, brown and spotted hyena, leopard, cheetah, and

smaller game, including mongoose, porcupine and the endangered honey badger.

The names of various landmarks within the park reflect its long history as a crossroads of many cultures, which have included the San, the Mier, the Huguenots and the Scottish at various times.

The park is an important element of the first phase of the Transfrontier Conservation Area 2010 Strategy, which is a priority of the SADC.

Namaqualand

The indigenous people of the Namaqualand region are the Namas. Their traditional Nama reed huts still abound in Leliefontein, Nourivier and Steinkopf.

Namaqualand is famous for a spectacular annual show in spring when an abundance of wild flowers covers vast tracts of desert. The flowers sprout and survive for a brief period before they wilt and disappear in the blistering heat and dry conditions just as suddenly as they had appeared.

The small town of Garies is the centre for those setting out to enjoy spring's show of exuberance in the Kamiesberg.

After diamonds were discovered along the West Coast in 1925, Alexander Bay was known for its mining activities. The town is no longer a high-security area and no permits are needed to enter. The Alexkor Museum paints a picture of the history of the area. The town also features the world's largest desert lichenfield, which has some 26 species.

At Hondeklip Bay, visitors can dive for crayfish and watch the local fisherfolk conduct their trade.

Established as a small-vessel harbour and railway junction in 1954 for the copper-mining industry, Port Nolloth is a centre for the small-scale diamond-recovery and crayfish industries. It is the only holiday resort on the Diamond Coast. The local factory sells fish and crayfish in season.

Set in a narrow valley bisecting the granite domes of the Klein Koperberge lies Springbok.

South of Springbok, near Kamieskroon, lies the Skilpad Wild Flower Reserve, part of the Namaqua National Park, which captures the full grandeur of the flower season. The 1 000-ha reserve operates only during the flower season.

The Goegap Nature Reserve comprises 15 004 ha of typically granite, rocky hills and sandy flats. The reserve also offers a 4x4, and several hiking and mountain-biking trails.

Namaqualand is also home to the Ais-Ais/Richtersveld National Park. It is managed jointly by the local Nama people and South African National Parks.

Upper Karoo (Bo-Karoo)

Flanked by the Towerberg, Colesberg is one of the Northern Cape's most beautiful towns.

The town features one of the country's last working horsemills. An Anglo-Boer/South African War tour is also on offer. A weekend tour includes a visit to the Norvalspont prisoner-of-war camp and cemetery. Colesberg has bred many of the country's top merino sheep. It is also renowned for producing high-quality racehorses.

De Aar is the most important railway junction in South Africa. The author Olive Schreiner lived in the town for many years. Visitors can dine in her former house, which has been converted into a restaurant.

Hanover is known for its handmade shoes and articles made mostly from sheepskin and leather.

The "Star of South Africa" diamond was discovered at Hopetown. The town, which is steeped in history, also features an old toll house and a block house dating from the Anglo-Boer/South African War.

At Wonderdraai near Prieska, visitors can see the horseshoe-shaped island formed by the flow of the Orange River. It seems as if the river turns to flow uphill.

Vanderkloof was built to house the people building the Vanderkloof Dam. Today, it is a flourishing holiday resort. Visitors can enjoy waterskiing, boardsailing, boating and swimming, or visit the Eskom Hydroelectric Power Station situated within the dam's wall.

Victoria West is home to the Apollo Theatre, South Africa's last operational art deco movie theatre from the 1950s. The theatre comes alive each September with the Apollo Film Festival.

The rare riverine rabbit is found in the Victoria West Nature Reserve.

Hantam Karoo

Near the small town of Brandvlei lies Verneukpan,

South Africa's so-called Big Five will soon become the Big Seven, when the whale and the shark are officially added to this tourist attraction.

South Africa will be the only country in the world to boast the Big Seven by adding the two ocean predators to the current Big Five, which are the lion, leopard, elephant, rhinoceros and buffalo.



where Sir Malcolm Campbell unsuccessfully attempted to break the world land-speed record in 1929.

Carnarvon is well known for its corbelled dome-roofed houses built of flat stones because of a lack of wood.

The floors of these interesting houses were smeared and coloured with a rich red mixture of fat and oxblood and polished with smooth stone.

A few kilometres outside Fraserburg lies the Gansfontein Palaeosurface.

Discovered in 1968, it comprises several trackways of large, four-footed and five-toed mammalian reptiles. The prints are estimated to be some 190 million years old.

Sutherland, birthplace of well-known Afrikaans author and poet NP van Wyk Louw, is known for its brilliant night skies and cold, biting winters.

The sterboom (star tree), which blossoms in September, is found only in Sutherland.

The South African Astronomical Observatory's (Saa) observation telescopes, including the Southern African Large Telescope (Salt), are in Sutherland.

From Monday to Saturday, the Saa offers two guided tours a day and two night tours a week. Day tours entail a guided walk through the visitors' centre adjacent to the telescope sites on the mountainside and a guided tour of selected telescopes, including the Salt.

During night tours, visitors can view interesting objects in the sky through two dedicated visitors' telescopes. Booking is essential.

Free State

The Free State lies in the heart of South Africa, with the Kingdom of Lesotho nestling in the hollow of its bean-like shape.

Between the Vaal River in the north and the Orange River in the south, this immense rolling prairie stretches as far as the eye can see.

This central region is characterised by endless rolling fields of wheat, sunflower and maize, and forms the principal bread basket of South Africa.

Motheo

With its King's Park Rose Garden containing more than 4 000 rose bushes, the Free State's major city, Bloemfontein, has rightfully earned the nickname "City of Roses". The city also hosts an annual rose festival.

The Eerste Raadsaal (First Parliament Building), built in 1849 as a school, is Bloemfontein's oldest surviving building. Still in its original condition,

this historical building is used as the seat of the Provincial Legislature.

The National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre has a repository of works by prominent Afrikaans authors. Exhibits in the Afrikaans Music Museum and the Theatre Museum (part of the centre) include old musical instruments, sheet music, costumes, photographs and furniture.

The national museum is notable for its wide collection of fossils, cultural-historical exhibits and archaeological displays, including the Florisbad skull, which was discovered in the 1930s at the Florisbad Spring, about 50 km north of Bloemfontein.

The National Women's Memorial is a sandstone obelisk, 36,5 m high, which commemorates the women and children who died in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer/South African War from 1899 to 1902. Visitors get a glimpse of life in the concentration and prisoner-of-war camps. The research library contains an extensive collection of Africana.

The Old Presidency dates back to 1885 and was the official residence of three presidents of the former Republic of the Orange Free State. It houses a museum depicting their respective terms of office, and a cultural centre for art exhibitions, theatrical productions and musical events.

The Observatory Theatre in Bloemfontein's game reserve is a unique attraction. Watching the sunrise from Naval Hill in the middle of the town, gives an idea of the size of the town. Naval Hill is the biggest game reserve that is completely surrounded by a city.

Bloemfontein has a busy cultural and social-events calendar. One of the annual events not to be missed is the Mangaung African Cultural Festival, popularly known as the Macufe Arts Festival, in September.

The Sand du Plessis Theatre and Art Gallery at Oliewenhuis is also worth visiting.

Botshabelo (Place of Refuge), 45 km from Bloemfontein on the N8 road to Lesotho, is believed to be the largest township settlement in the Free State – and the second-largest in South Africa after Soweto.

Nearby, the town of Thaba Nchu features luxury hotels and a casino, with the Maria Moroka Nature Reserve surrounding Thaba Nchu Sun and the Setlogelo Dam.

Xhariep

Bethulie used to be a London Missionary Society station. The original mission buildings still stand.

The Pellissier House Museum depicts the history of events in the area.

The Anglo-Boer/South African War concentration camp cemetery in Bethulie worth a visit.

The Gariep Dam, more than 100 km long and 15 km wide, is part of the Orange River Water Scheme, the largest inland expanse of water in South Africa.

Between the dam and Bethulie is the Gariep Dam Nature Reserve. On the southern side of the dam lies the Oviston Nature Reserve.

Philippolis, the oldest town in the Free State, was founded as a London Missionary Society station in 1824. It was the first mission station in the province.

Trompsburg is the hub of the Free State Merino sheep-farming industry.

The Tussen-die-Riviere Nature Reserve reputedly supports more game than any other sanctuary in the Free State and receives hunters in autumn and winter.

A fountain near Koffiefontein was a favourite outspan for transport riders in the 19th century. In June 1870, one of these transport riders picked up a diamond near the fountain. This prompted a rush, and by 1882 Koffiefontein was a booming town with four mining companies.

Thabo Mofutsanyana

With its beautiful snow-capped mountains providing a backdrop to numerous romantic hideaways, this untouched, pristine area with its breathtaking scenery possesses grandeur of majestic proportion.

The Basotho Cultural Village in the QwaQwa Nature Reserve is a living museum where visitors can witness the Sotho traditions and lifestyle in the chief's kraal.

Clocolan is known for its cherry trees, which provide a spectacular sight when they blossom in spring. San rock paintings and engravings are also found in the area.

Clarens is often described as the "Jewel of the Free State", owing to its spectacular scenery. San paintings are found on farms in the area.

Close by, the Highlands Route meanders along the foothills of the Maluti mountains. One can also explore the magnificent mountain scenery by bike. The town is known for the many arts and crafts shops, which offer the visitor a wide range of curios and original artwork.

Ficksburg is known for its cherry and asparagus farms. Every November, a cherry festival is held there. The town is a gateway to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho.

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park, known for its beautiful scenery, is a very popular holiday destination. A vulture restaurant allows visitors to observe these scavengers closely. San paintings can also be viewed.

The Highlands Route follows the Lesotho border via Ladybrand and ends at Zastron in the south. San caves and rock art are some of the main features of the route.

The birdwatching mecca of Seekoeivlei Nature Reserve near Memel constitutes a wetland with Ramsar status, and is surrounded by private game and holiday farms.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Lejweleputswa region

Bethlehem lies on the banks of the Jordaan River and was founded by the Voortrekkers during the 1840s.

The museum in Miller Street depicts the history of the area. The banks of the Jordaan River form part of the Pretoriuskloof Nature Reserve – a sanctuary for birds and small game.

Van Reenen's Pass winds through the Drakensberg, and was originally used by migrating herds of zebra, hartebeest, blesbok and wildebeest. The Llandaff Oratory in the nearby village of Van Reenen is believed to be the smallest Roman Catholic Church in the world.

At Harrismith, there are various memorials in honour of those who fought in the Anglo-Boer/South African War and World War I. Of particular interest is a memorial for the Scots Guards and Grenadier Guards.

Platberg, the 2 394-m "flat mountain", is the town's landmark. A well-known race, claimed by some to be the toughest in the country, is run annually up, along and back down the mountain. Sterkfontein Dam is ideal for water sports and fishing.

The Riemland Museum in Heilbron depicts the heritage and agricultural activities of the region.

The QwaQwa district is a traditional home to the Basotho people. Karakul carpets, mohair, wall hangings, copper, glassware and brass are made and sold at Phuthaditjhaba. The nearby Metsi Matsho and Fika Patso dams are renowned for trout-fishing.

Welkom is known for its gold mines. It is also the only city in the country where traffic circles are used instead of traffic lights.

The world's deepest wine cellar is at the St Helena Mine, which is 857 m below the Earth's surface.

Bothaville is regarded as the centre of the Free State Maize Route. The Nampo Harvest Farm and Festival attracts more than 20 000 visitors each year and is the second-largest private agricultural show in the world. Bothaville also hosts the annual Food and Witblits Festival, drawing visitors from all over South Africa.

The sandstone church in Kestrell is possibly the most impressive of all the Eastern Free State's sandstone buildings.

Winburg is the oldest town and first capital of the former Republic of the Orange Free State. The Voortrekker Museum, using life-size models, depicts the daily routine of the trekkers. A concentration camp cemetery is situated close by.

Sasolburg originated in 1954 with the establishment of Sasol, the synthetic fuel producer.

Parys, which is situated on the banks of the Vaal River, is a popular holiday destination.

The nearby Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site was caused by the collision of a meteorite with the Earth many years ago. The meteorite is visible and looks like a small hill between Parys and Vredefort. It is the only world heritage site in the Free State.

It features unique fauna and flora, including 100 different plant species, more than 300 types of birds and a variety of small mammals. Various hiking and mountain-bike trails are also on offer.

Jukskei is the first indigenous game, which has developed to international participation. The Jukskei Museum in Kroonstad has over 3 500 objects that depict the development of the game.

Jagersfontein has the deepest man-made hole in the world. The Excelsior diamond of 971 carats was found in this open-cast mine in 1893. Eagles nest against the cliffs of the mine.

Eastern Cape

The main feature of the Eastern Cape is its magnificent coastline. With its wide open sandy beaches, secluded lagoons and towering cliffs, the Indian Ocean coastline provides the province with a rich natural tourist attraction, which is also a paradise for watersports enthusiasts.

Added to the diverse coastal experiences are more than 60 state-owned game reserves and more than 30 private game farms, which collectively cover an area greater than the Kruger National Park.

Just 75 years after the proclamation of the Addo Elephant National Park in the Eastern Cape to protect the 11 elephants that remained in the area, Addo is now a world-renowned mega park. Elephant numbers have swelled to over 450 – making this one of the densest elephant populations on Earth. There are buffalo, lion, leopard and rhino completing the Big Five. With great white sharks and southern right whales in the marine section of the park, it means that Addo now boasts the Big Seven of Africa.



Amatola mountain region

The Amatola mountains are famous for their scenery and history, and stretch from Adelaide in the east to Stutterheim in the west. With its lush forests and ancient battlefields, it is an area steeped in Xhosa culture and early settler history.

The dense forests of the Amatolas are a haven for the endangered Cape parrot, and were also home to the first dinosaur to be identified in South Africa, the Blinkwater Monster, a large fossilised reptile discovered near Fort Beaufort.

Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy Cathcart, where trout-fishing, hiking, riding and birdwatching are among the attractions. The Amatole Hiking Trail is a well-known scenic, but strenuous, trail.

The coastal city of Port Elizabeth, which has earned the name “Friendly City”, is a superb holiday destination offering a diverse mix of eco-attractions. The Isuzu National Sailing Week is held annually in April in the waters of Algoa Bay.

The Red Location Museum of the People’s Struggle in New Brighton – winner of three international awards – was designed to be both a monument to South Africa’s struggle against apartheid and an integral part of community life in a township that acted as a crucible for the struggle.

The city boasts various scuba-diving sites. Visitors can also visit Bay World with its oceanarium and snake park, and many splendid museums. Other attractions include the Greater Addo Elephant National Park and game reserves; the traditional healing village, Kaya Lendaba; bird-watching; air tours; canoeing; various mountain-bike and horse-riding trails; and organised outdoor excursions.

Within the city there are some beautiful parks with well-landscaped gardens, including the St George’s Park, which covers 73 ha and houses the famous Port Elizabeth Cricket Club, the oldest bowling green in South Africa; Prince Alfred’s Guard Memorial, the 1882 Victorian Pearson Conservatory; and the 54-ha Settlers’ Park.

Tourists can also explore the Donkin Heritage Trail, take a ride on the famous Apple Express, and hike along the site of ancient shipwrecks on the Sacramento Trail. At King William’s Town, tourists can visit the Amathole Missionary Museum. The grave of Black Consciousness activist, Steve Biko, is also in the town.

Wild Coast

Since Portuguese mariners first pioneered the sea route around the Cape to India, this notorious coast has claimed countless ships.

Southern right and humpback whales and their calves are regularly spotted from the high dunes, usually between May and November, while common and bottlenose dolphins are often seen close to shore.

The entire region, once known as the “Transkei homeland”, is the home of a major section of the Xhosa-speaking southern Nguni (or Pondo) tribes. Brightly coloured examples of their beadwork, together with traditional pottery and basketry, can be bought from roadside vendors and at some trading posts.

Visitors to the rural village of Qunu can view the childhood home of former President Mandela. In the city of Mthatha, the Nelson Mandela Museum tells the story of this great figure. The museum is a collection of heritage sectors spread across three locations: Qunu, Mveso and Mthatha. A display reflecting the life and times of Mandela can be found at the Bhunga Building section of the Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha. Mandela has received thousands of gifts from presidents, groups and ordinary people. Accepted on behalf of the people of South Africa, they are in safekeeping at the museum for the benefit and appreciation of the nation. Artefacts range from children’s letters to bejewelled camel covers.

The alignment of the N2 national route along the Wild Coast will help open up investment opportunities in this area.

Coffee Bay is popular among surfers, anglers and shell collectors.

To the south is the prominent rock formation, the Hole in the Wall. The local Xhosa call this place Izi Kheleni (Place of Thunder). During high tide, the waves move through the hole in such a way that the concussion can be heard throughout the valley.

Karoo

The vast plains of the Karoo have an air of grandeur, and its many picturesque towns are steeped in history.

The Owl House in Nieu Bethesda displays the creative talent of the late Helen Martins. Statues of mermaids, wise men, camels, owls and churches create a wonderland in the garden. All the artworks were created with broken bottles, bits of mirror and cement.

More than 200 houses in Graaff-Reinet have been restored to their original Victorian appearance, and proclaimed national monuments. The Old Library Museum houses the Lex Bremner Fossil Collection of Karoo reptile fossils and a collection of Khoi and San art reproductions. Urquhart House has a popular genealogical research centre.

Almost 50 km south-west of Graaff-Reinet is the Kalkkop Crater, a gigantic circular impact that is of major scientific importance.

To the north-west of Graaff-Reinet lies the Valley of Desolation. A steep and narrow road leads into the mountains that surround the valley.

The Valley of Desolation is a national monument within the Karoo Nature Reserve, and was formed millions of years ago by weathering erosion.

The first evidence of the presence of dinosaurs in South Africa can be viewed at Maclear.

The Mountain Zebra National Park is a haven for the Cape mountain zebra species, which at one time inhabited most of the Cape. The park saved these animals from extinction and today their population stands at about 350.

Other species found in the park include various antelope such as eland, the African wildcat, bat-eared fox, and more than 200 bird species, including the pale-winged starling, the booted eagle and the blue crane.

N6 Route

This route runs from Bloemfontein to East London. Popular attractions include the slopes of the Tiffindell Ski Resort and the trout-filled streams, as well as the many caves adorned with ancient rock art.

Several historic towns can be found in the region, including Barkly East, Rhodes, Lady Grey, Elliot, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp and Queens-town.

Sunshine Coast

The Sunshine Coast comprises miles of unspoilt, sun-drenched beaches.

Port Alfred lies at the mouth of the Kowie River. Coastal hills are home to the oribi – a small territorial buck that was recently near extinction.

Inland, Grahamstown is sometimes referred to as the “City of Saints”, because of the more than

40 churches found in the town. It is also known for the National Arts Festival, which is held annually. During the festival, Grahamstown is transformed into a dedicated arts venue where performers, visual artists, audiences, writers and craftspeople fuse in a celebration of creative energy.

Other attractions include various museums and historical buildings, the oldest postbox in South Africa, botanical gardens, the cathedrals of St Michael and St George, nature reserves and hiking trails. Situated north-east of Grahamstown, the Great Fish River Reserve consists primarily of valley bushveld habitat and is surrounded by both tribal land and commercial game reserves and farms.

The reserve boasts abundant wildlife such as white rhino, giraffe, waterbuck, Cape buffalo, hippo, kudu, springbok and eland.

There are several historic forts and remains from the legendary frontier wars located in the area.

East London, South Africa’s only river port city, was originally established as a supply port to serve the colonial British military headquarters at King William’s Town. The city’s own waterfront development, Latimer’s Landing, is situated on the banks of the Buffalo River. The East London Aquarium houses approximately 400 different marine and freshwater species.

The East London Museum depicts the natural environment and rich heritage of the region. Best known for the prehistoric coelacanth, the museum also displays reconstructions of the extinct dodo of Mauritius, along with the only extant dodo egg in the world.

The Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area is the largest of the inland protected areas and provides opportunities to visit spectacular fynbos-covered mountains on foot or in off-road vehicles.

There is a fascinating shell collection at the Shell Museum at Kei Mouth.

Tsitsikamma

This region, stretching from Plettenberg Bay to Jeffreys Bay, is renowned for its dense forests, majestic mountains and deep river gorges. It forms the eastern end of the Garden Route.

The word “tsitsikamma” is derived from the Khoekhoen words “tse-tsesa” meaning clear, and “gami” meaning water.

South Africa’s first marine park, the Tsitsikamma National Park, extends along a rocky coastline of 50 km, and 3 km out to sea.

Inland, adventure-seekers will find deep gorges and temperate evergreen forests criss-crossed by

six hiking trails, including the five-day Otter Trail. The varied wildlife includes dolphins and whales, caracal, genet, chacma baboon, dassie and mon-goose. Another popular adventure is a black-water tubing experience on the Storms River.

Prominent bird species in the area are the African black oystercatcher, the orange-breasted sunbird, the Nerina trogon and the colourful Knysna loerie. A lucky few may catch a glimpse of the rare Cape clawless otter, which the Otter Trail is named after.

Limpopo

Limpopo is a land of dramatic contrasts characterised by hot savanna plains and mist-clad mountains, age-old indigenous forests and cycads alongside modern plantations, and ancient mountain fortresses and the luxury of contemporary infrastructure and modern-day facilities.

Steeped in history, Limpopo celebrates a rich cultural heritage, and at many archaeological sites the mysteries of the past and ancient peoples are still being unearthed. The present tranquillity of the province belies a turbulent past, to which many monuments and museums attest. Much of the land, particularly in the Kruger National Park and other game and nature reserves, is unspoilt, and provides sanctuary to large numbers of game.

Waterberg

The Nylsvley Nature Reserve boasts one of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl and bushveld birds in South Africa. More than 400 species frequent the area. The Mokopane vicinity has several nature reserves. The Arend Dieperink Museum features a fine cultural-historical collection. The Makapan caves are notable for their fossils and the caves are being developed into an archaeological site. Makapan Valley is an extension of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site. The Makapansgat caves and limeworks near Mokopane represent an archaeological site of global importance.

The Thabazimbi district has a large concentration of private game reserves and is one of the fastest-growing ecotourism areas in the country. The Marakele National Park is home to some rare yellowwood and cedar trees and the world's largest colony of Cape vultures. It is also a leader in the conservation of the black rhino outside of the Kruger National Park and the KwaZulu-Natal parks. Bela-Bela is known for its hot springs. There are also a number of game reserves and leisure resorts in the area.

The Waterberg range is rich in indigenous trees, streams, springs, wetlands and birdlife. Cliffs known as the "Palace of the Vultures" harbour a large breeding colony of Cape vultures. Modimolle is the region's main town.

Capricorn district

The Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum outside Polokwane is a traditional Northern Sotho kraal. Men and women practise traditional skills such as making baskets, clay pots, furniture and utensils, and preparing hides.

Polokwane is considered the premier game-hunting destination in South Africa. It is ideally located near the neighbouring countries of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland. Zion City at Moria near Polokwane is the headquarters of the Zion Christian Church, which attracts more than a million pilgrims every Easter.

Polokwane hosts a great variety of museums and art galleries.

Vhembe district

The Mapungubwe Archaeological Site, situated 80 km west of Musina, lies within the boundaries of the Mapungubwe National Park. It is one of the richest of its kind in Africa and a world heritage site. Excavations in the 1930s uncovered a royal graveyard, which included a number of golden artefacts, including the famous gold-foil rhinoceros.

The Schoemansdal Voortrekker Town and Museum, west of Makhado, is built on the site of an original Voortrekker village and depicts their lifestyle between 1848 and 1852.

Also worth visiting is the Big Tree in the Mutale Municipality, the Tshatshingo potholes, the mystical lake of Dzivhafundudzi and the holy forest and waterfalls at Phiphidi.

Mopani district

The Modjadji Nature Reserve, north of Tzaneen, is named after the legendary Rain Queen, Modjadji, who is believed to have settled in the area early in the 16th century. The reserve encompasses the world's largest concentration of the cycad species *Encephalartos transvenosus*, also known as the Modjadji cycad.

The Hans Merensky Nature Reserve and Mineral Spa on the southern banks of the Great Letaba River supports a large variety of game. At the adjoining Tsonga Kraal Open-Air Museum, arts, crafts and traditional huts reflect the Tsonga lifestyle of 100 years ago.

The sunland's baobab is the world's largest baobab tree, measuring about 47 m in circumference and stretching 22 m high.

At 6 000 years old, the tree is older than the pyramids of Giza. The tree is a premier Limpopo tourist attraction and is found in Modjadjiskloof. In 1993, the farm owners cleared out the hollow centre of the tree and discovered evidence of both the bushmen and Voortrekkers. The natural floor inside the trunk, about a metre below ground level, has a railway sleeper pub, which holds close on 60 people. The tree is famous around the world and has even appeared on the cover of the *Wall Street Journal*.

The largest baobab in the world blooms in spring and is home to a variety of bird life.



The Kruger National Park (northern section) is one of South Africa's major tourist attractions. The park is home to a large number and wide variety of amphibians, reptiles and birds, as well as 147 mammal species, including the Big Five.

Thulamela, in the northern part of the Kruger National Park, was opened to guided groups in June 1997. This followed seven years of archaeological excavations, which brought to light the skeletons of two ancient royals and a multitude of artefacts, including gold bangles, beads and a double gong.

Bohlabela district

On the way to the Kruger National Park, visitors can enjoy wildlife experiences at Manyeleti, home to the Big Five. Adventurers can attempt mountain-climbing at the Mangwazi Nature Reserve and enjoy the Mapulaneng Trail at Zoeknog. The Inyaka Dam at Bushbuckridge is also worth a visit.

North West

North West is blessed with several cultural villages that entertain and enrich visitors.

A number of excellent game reserves have been established, including the Pilanesberg National Park, known as the "Jewel of the North West". It is set in a crater on an extinct volcano and is home to the Big Five as well as a wide variety of smaller game and birds.

Central district

The historic route of Mafikeng includes an Anglo-Boer/South African War siege site, the Molema House where Sol Plaatje lived while writing his *Mafikeng Diary*, and the Mafikeng Museum.

The Lichtenburg Biodiversity Conservation Centre and the Botsalano Game Reserve are well worth a visit.

The Groot Marico region is known as mampoyer country and visitors can embark on a tour of the Mampoyer Route. The Kortkloof Cultural Village is dedicated to the Tswana people.

Other attractions include the Wondergat; the Bosbult Monument, which commemorates a battle fought during the Anglo-Boer/South African War; the Kaditshwene Iron Age village ruins; and various hiking trails.

Ottosdal is situated in the centre of the North West and was established as a Dutch Reformed Church parish on the farm Korannafontein in 1913 and named after its owner, GP Otto. Ottosdal is the only place in South Africa where the unique "wonderstone", or pyrophyllite, is found and mined.

The annual agricultural show in Ottosdal is one of the oldest in the province. Trenches and cemeteries dating from the Anglo-Boer/South African War can be found on the farms Gestoptefontein and Driekuul. San-rock engravings, Stone-Age implements and structures are found on farms such as Witpoort, Gestoptefontein, Driekuul and Korannafontein. The Garden of Remembrance contains graves of soldiers killed during the war. The Old Farmhouse was built in 1910 and houses a unique African collection. The Old Water Mill that was built around 1860 is a national monument.

The Ottosdal Night Race is organised in conjunction with the Diamond Marathon Club. The event consists of 42,2-km, 21,1-km, 10-km and 5-km fun runs.

Eastern district

The Hartbeespoort Dam is a popular spot for weekend outings, breakfast runs and yachting. The Hartbeespoort Reptile and Animal Park is situated on the banks of the dam.

Cultural experiences in the area include the popular Mapoch and Gaabo Motho cultural villages as well as the Ring Wagon Inn.

The De Wildt Cheetah-Breeding and Research Centre specialises in breeding cheetah and other endangered wildlife species. Other places of interest include the Borakalalo Game Reserve, the Margaret Roberts Herb Farm and the Phaladingwe Nature Trail.

There are several golf courses in the area.

Bophirima district

The Taung Skull Fossil Site and Blue Pools are renowned for the Taung skull found in the Buxton

quarries. In July 2005, the World Heritage Committee declared the Taung Skull Fossil Site an extension of the Sterkfontein Fossil Hominid Site. This region is popular with adventure-seekers – especially those who enjoy the 4x4 routes and hunting farms.

Rustenburg district

The Pilanesberg National Park supports more than 7 000 head of game and 350 bird species.

The 60 000-ha Madikwe Game Reserve is home to 66 large mammal species. Over 10 000 animals of 27 major species have been reintroduced under Operation Phoenix. A hot-air balloon ride, day and night game drives and bushwalks are available. Sun City and the Palace of the Lost City are very popular tourist attractions, offering gambling, golf, extravaganza shows, watersports and an artificial sea. There are various hiking trails in the region. The Heritage Route starts at the Sterkfontein Caves World Heritage Site and ends at Pilanesberg.

Southern district

The OPM Prozesky Bird Sanctuary in Potchefstroom has over 200 bird species and is situated adjacent to the Mooi River. The Oudorp Hiking Trail takes visitors through the old part of Klerksdorp where 12 Voortrekker families settled.

Other attractions in the region include the Potchefstroom Lakeside Resort, the Faan Meintjies Nature Reserve in Klerksdorp, mine tours at Orkney, the Diggers Route at Wolmaransstad and the Bloemhof Dam Nature Reserve.

Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga – “the Place Where the Sun Rises” – epitomises every traveller’s dream of the true African experience. Located in the north-eastern part of South Africa, the province is bordered by Mozambique to the east and the Kingdom of Swaziland to the south and east.

The climate and topography vary from cool highland grasslands at 1 600 m above sea level, through the middleveld and escarpment, to the subtropical Lowveld towards the Kruger National Park and many private game reserves. Scenic beauty, climate and wildlife, voted the most attractive features of South Africa, are found in abundance in this province.

Attractions range from game viewing and bird-watching to scenic drives across the valleys and peaks of the vast Drakensberg escarpment, and include agritourism, industrial and adventure tourism and cultural experiences.

Historical sites and villages, old wagon routes and monuments mark events and characters who passed this way in search of adventure and wealth.

The cultural heritage of the province is varied and fascinating. The Ndebele beadwork and wall-painting in the north-west, the arts and crafts of the Lowveld and the different traditional villages throughout the province offer a unique insight into the people’s history.

Nelspruit

Nelspruit is the capital of Mpumalanga and the commercial and administrative hub of the Lowveld. The Nelspruit Historical Trail is an hour-long route stretching from the Promenade Centre to the Civic Centre.

The Blue Train runs between Pretoria and Nelspruit from May to September on a trip called the “Lowveld Experience”. Rovos Rail’s trains also travel to Nelspruit.

The Green Heritage Hiking Trail in the Nelspruit Nature Reserve is one of several walks in the reserve and one of many in the region.

Not to be missed is the Lowveld Botanical Garden, as well as the Reptile Park, the Sudwala caves, PR Owen Dinosaur Park and the tranquil town of White River. Well known as an artists’ haven and a gateway to the Kruger National Park, White River also boasts an orange winery.

Panorama

Barberton features many reminders of the early gold-rush era. Museums include Belhaven, Fernlea House and Stopforth House. The only known verdite deposits in the world are found in the rocks of the Barberton district. The annual Diggers Festival is held in September.

The Blyderivierspoort Nature Reserve near Graskop is characterised by striking rock formations and a rich diversity of plants. Within the reserve, the Bourke’s Luck potholes were formed by river erosion and the action of flood water.

The spectacular Blyde River Canyon is a 26-km-long gorge carved out of the face of the escarpment, and is one of the natural wonders of Africa. The canyon is the third-largest in the world, the only green canyon, and hosts three rivers that feed the Blydepoort Dam at Swadini.

God’s Window provides a magnificent panoramic view across miles of densely forested mountains, the green Lowveld and the canyon. The Blyderivierspoort Hiking Trail is one of the most popular in the country. A number of other hiking trails are also available.

The southern section of the Kruger National Park, which is a major tourist attraction, falls within this region.

Kaapsehoop is a quaint historical village known for the wild horses that frequent the district. Blue swallows are regular visitors from September to April.

The Lydenburg Museum is situated in the Gustav Klingbiel Reserve, which is the site of archaeological ruins from the Later Iron Age. The Lydenburg heads, human-like masks dated to 500 AD, were discovered in this area.

Sabie is the centre of the largest man-made forest in South Africa. The Cultural Historical Forestry Museum depicts various aspects of the country's forestry industry. The Bridal Veil, Horseshoe and Lone Creek waterfalls, and Mac Mac pools and falls just outside Sabie are well worth a visit.

The 69-km Prospector's Trail starts at the Mac Mac Forest Station and leads to the Bourke's Luck potholes.

At the Montrose Falls in Schoemanskloof, the Crocodile River cascades 12 m into a series of rock pools. It is also the starting point of the annual Lowveld Crocodile Canoe Marathon, held in February.

Pilgrim's Rest is a living museum and a replica of the early gold-mining town. The Alanglade House Museum offers guided tours of the former mine-manager's house, while the Diggings Museum just outside the town arranges guided tours of gold-panning activities. This area was the setting for *Jock of the Bushveld*, the novel by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick about the experiences of a man and his dog as they shared adventures in the world of African gold mining. The Dredzen Shop Museum features a range of items in use nearly a century ago. The Pilgrim's Rest Festival is held every December.

Mount Sheba Nature Reserve, south of Pilgrim's Rest, is best known for its indigenous forest – one of few left in the region.

Highlands Meander

The Highlands Meander is a mecca for fly-fishers. It is in the placid and pristine waters of this region that one finds various stocks of fish, with trout as the major drawcard. The meander also offers numerous other activities.

At the Verloren Vlei and Steenkampsberg nature reserves at Dullstroom, one can get a rare glimpse of the endangered blue, wattled and crowned cranes.

The Loskop Dam Nature Reserve offers game watching, boating and fishing.

A large number of hiking trails is available, such as the Elandskrans Trail, which includes a 30-minute train ride between Waterval-Boven and Waterval-Onder.

Cultural Heartland

Visitors to the Cultural Heartland can immerse themselves in the true cultural heritage of Mpumalanga. Here, one can learn about the proud and welcoming Ndebele people, revered for the striking and colourful geometric patterns on their houses, clothing and beadwork.

This region also has illuminating historical sites such as the Botshabelo Historical Village, near Middelburg.

Cosmos Country

Cosmos Country covers parts of what is known as the energy belt of Mpumalanga, which is home to a number of power stations. This region also has the world's largest underground coal-mining complex and the Sasol plant that is renowned for its oil-from-coal technology.

The carpet of cosmos flowers that blossoms in late summer lures visitors to this region.

Wild Frontier

Various archaeological discoveries dating back almost three billion years were made in the imposing mountains of this region. Visitors can enjoy a rare glimpse of the inimitable San paintings embossed in some rocks.

The region also holds rich historical sentiments centred on the monument of the late Mozambican President Samora Machel, constructed in the village of Mbuzini. The year 2006 saw the 20th anniversary of Machel's death in an aircraft crash.

While they are in this region, visitors have the opportunity to visit Swaziland and Mozambique, which are nearby.

Grass and Wetlands

Grass and Wetlands is a paradise, with its variety of bird species. This region stretches across the deep valleys and mountains of the east where thermal springs bubble to the surface.

There are 270 pans and lakes within a 20-km radius of Lake Chrissie. In this region, visitors can take part in the unusual "frogging expedition" or simply gaze at the stars during "star-gazing weekends".

Gauteng

Gauteng, the "Place of Gold", is the economic powerhouse of South Africa. It is characterised by

a cosmopolitan, multicultural mix of people from all walks of life. The province's unique cultural and social legacy is evident from the many excellent museums, theatres, cultural precincts and craft markets. To strengthen Gauteng's position as a tourism destination of choice, the province must continue to increase the appeal of special destinations such as the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site and the Dinokeng Game Reserve and improve tourism offerings in the areas of competitive sport and the creative industries.

Tourism attractions in and around the Cradle of Humankind have grown to more than 380, with over half of these offering graded accommodation. Dinokeng attractions continue to grow.

The Vaal Dam, which supplies water to most of Gauteng's residents, covers some 300 km² and is a popular venue for watersports. Numerous resorts line the shore. The dam also attracts diverse bird species.

Vanderbijlpark was built during the late 1940s by the then Iron and Steel Corporation to accommodate its employees.

The Sterkfontein caves near Krugersdorp are the site of the discovery of the famous skull of Mrs Ples, an estimated 2,5-million-year-old hominid fossil, and Little Foot, an almost complete hominid skeleton some 3,3 million years old.

The broader Cradle of Humankind site consists of 47 000 ha, with numerous caves, the most famous of which are the Sterkfontein caves.

In 1999, Sterkfontein and its environs were declared a world heritage site.

Forty percent of all the world's human ancestor fossils have been found here, including several of the world's most famous and important fossils.

A further 500 hominid fossils and more than 9 000 stone tools have been excavated in the area, and work is ongoing.

The Krugersdorp Game Reserve provides sanctuary for several game species, including four of the Big Five. The African Fauna and Bird Park houses various species of wildlife and birds.

The South African National Railway and Steam Museum at Randfontein Estates Gold Mine outside Krugersdorp houses some of the country's old steam locomotives, a diesel-electric locomotive, and more than 50 vintage passenger coaches. Train rides are offered once a month.

A team of Lippizaner stallions performs every Sunday at the South African National Horsemanship Centre in Kyalami, near Johannesburg.

Visitors to Roodepoort can go on walks and trails through the Kloofendal Nature Reserve, or enjoy a picnic or a show at the popular Kloofendal

Amphitheatre. The Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden boasts a 70-m-high waterfall and breeding pairs of black eagles.

Forty kilometres north of Pretoria lies a ring of hills a kilometre in diameter and 100 m high. These are the walls of an impact crater left by an asteroid that hit the area some 200 000 years ago. The Tswaing Meteorite Crater is similar in size to the well-known Barringer Meteor Crater in Arizona, in the United States of America. The crater walls at Tswaing were originally about twice as high as they are today.

There is a museum adjacent to the crater. A path leads from the museum to the crater, along the rim, and down to the central lake. The crater is covered with indigenous trees and bushes, which attract a variety of bird life.

The old mining town of Cullinan developed around the Premier Diamond Mine. Many turn-of-the-century houses still stand. The mine has produced some of the world's most famous diamonds, including the Cullinan Diamond, the world's largest at 3 106 carats.

Johannesburg

The Adler Museum of the History of Medicine depicts the history of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy in South Africa. The Pharmacy Museum in Melrose houses a large variety of medicines, including more than 670 traditional medicines that have been collected throughout southern Africa.

There is also a display of old prescription books and dictionaries used by pharmacists.

Newtown is at the heart of initiatives to revitalise the inner city of Johannesburg and to give it soul. Here visitors will find the renowned Market Theatre, jazz bars, dance studios and artists' communes among museums, libraries and a host of places of historic interest.

The Nelson Mandela Bridge is a landmark gateway into Newtown, the arts precinct of Johannesburg. It is the largest cable-stayed bridge in southern Africa.

Museum Africa in Newtown tells the story of life in South Africa from the Stone Age to the Nuclear Age and beyond.

The Market Theatre Complex comprises three theatres, an art gallery, restaurants and pubs.

A bronze statue of the champion of passive resistance, Mahatma Gandhi, can be seen in the city centre.

The Lesedi Cultural Village in the Swartkops hills north of Johannesburg gives visitors the opportunity to meet families of different cultural

Number 8115 Vilakazi Street in Orlando West, Soweto, which used to be the home of former President Nelson Mandela, has been transformed into a museum. It is also the house the anti-apartheid hero returned to after being freed from 27 years in jail.

Mandela did not spend much time in the house as he was often on the run from security forces before his 1962 arrest. The house was petrol-bombed a number of times.

The refurbished house is decorated with photographs and other memorabilia from Mandela's life.



groupings. It features four traditional homesteads where visitors can spend the night with a family of their choice.

The Phumangena Zulu Kraal is home to traditional Zulu people living and working there.

The Melville koppies in Johannesburg was once the site of a Stone Age African village and iron-smelting works. Flora include 80% of the species recorded on the Witwatersrand. It is open to the public from September to April.

Gold Reef City is a theme park based on Johannesburg during the gold-rush era.

The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg is a state-of-the-art tribute to the rise and fall of apartheid, with 22 exhibition areas that take the visitor on an emotional journey through the state-sanctioned system of apartheid. A team of curators, film-makers, historians, designers and architects assembled the exhibits on a seven-hectare site.

Constitution Hill features the impressive building housing South Africa's Constitutional Court, and offers visitors the chance to view the fort, the so-called native gaol, the women's gaol and the awaiting-trial block. People once imprisoned at these facilities include Gandhi and Albert Luthuli, as well as the only woman to be executed in South Africa's history, Daisy de Melker.

At Santarama Miniland and Entertainment World, visitors can explore models of South Africa's most popular beacons, such as Robben Island, OR Tambo International Airport, East London Harbour, and the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

A large, well-established park surrounds Zoo Lake, which breeding bird colonies frequent. Other attractions include jazz concerts, rowing boats for hire, a tea garden and a restaurant.

Fordsburg, a suburb on the western side of Johannesburg, often called the city's "little India", has grown in recent times, its identity shifting and merging with the different customs and flavours that have made it a centrepiece in the cultural design of the city.

The South African Museum of Military History houses an impressive collection of weaponry and uniforms from the two world wars.

The South African Transport Museum in Heidelberg represents all aspects of South Africa's transport services.

Soweto is a popular tourist destination. It is estimated that some 1 000 foreign tourists visit Soweto every day. Its tourism industry contributes about R143 million to Gauteng's GDP.

The two-bedroom house where former President Nelson Mandela lived before his incarceration has been declared a national monument and converted into a museum.

The Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown (Soweto) is the place where the Freedom Charter was signed in 1955.

The Kliptown Project comprises a hotel, the recently opened Kliptown Museum, retail outlets, restaurants and offices.

No tour of Soweto would be complete without a visit to the Hector Pieterse Museum, which commemorates the people who died during the Student Uprising of 16 June 1976.

The museum was named after the young boy who was the first person to be shot dead by police on that day.

Guest houses and B&B establishments are a fast-growing phenomenon in Soweto.

A tourism and information centre was opened in Soweto in February 2006. The centre provides comprehensive information to tourists. Visitors can book accommodation in Soweto, and plan and book tours and site guides.

Pretoria

A variety of historical buildings are found in the city, which is known as the "Jacaranda City" because of the many jacaranda trees that line its streets. When these are in full bloom in October, they cover the city in a lilac haze, providing spectacular views from the surrounding hills.

Church Square is built around a statue of Paul Kruger, president of the former Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, and includes buildings such as the Old Raadsaal and the Palace of Justice.

Ten minutes' drive away from Church Square is Freedom Park, which commemorates the country's political history.

Once fully completed in 2010, the 35-ha site will comprise a garden of remembrance, a museum, and statues and sculptures to honour South Africans who have contributed to the country's freedom and development.

The Kruger House Museum contains the personal belongings of President Kruger.

Melrose House is a beautiful example of Victorian architecture. The Peace Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the Anglo-Boer/South African War, was signed there in 1902.

Demonstrations at the Pioneer Open-Air Museum include cow milking, butter and candle making, bread baking and coffee-bean grinding.

Other museums include the Police Museum, the Coert Steynberg Museum and the Transvaal Museum of Natural History.

The Voortrekker Monument also has a museum and commemorates the Great Trek. Some 260 steps lead to the dome, where spectacular views of the city can be enjoyed. The monument receives about 200 000 visitors a year.

Fort Schanskop has been refurbished and has a 375-seat amphitheatre.

The Union Buildings were designed by Sir Herbert Baker and completed in 1913. They were the setting for the presidential inauguration of Dr Mandela in 1994, those of Thabo Mbeki on 16 June 1999 and 27 April 2004, and of Jacob Zuma on 9 May 2009.

The Sammy Marks Museum near Pretoria dates from 1885. Rooms in the house are filled with Victorian paintings, furniture, silver and porcelain. Visitors can relax at the tea garden and restaurant on the premises.

The General Smuts House Museum in Irene, south-east of Pretoria, contains the original furnishings of the Smuts family. A popular arts and crafts market is held here on certain Saturdays.

The Rietvlei Nature Reserve is notable for its grass types, herbs, a large number of game and many bird species.

The Mapoch Ndebele Village, north of Pretoria, is being restored by its residents and the National Cultural History Museum. To develop the project into a viable, living tourist village, the 50 families staying there have undergone tourist-guide and business training. It is the first living cultural village in South Africa owned and managed by its residents.

Mamelodi is about 20 km from the city centre and features the Solomon Mahlangu Square, which is dedicated to this freedom fighter.

The Willem Prinsloo Agricultural Museum outside Pretoria features a farmstead dating from 1880. Traditional farming activities are demonstrated, and annual events include a prickly-pear festival, a mampoer festival and the Agricultural Museum Show.

The Pretoria National Botanical Garden houses the National Herbarium of South Africa, the largest in the southern hemisphere.

KwaZulu-Natal

Tourism constitutes about 8% of the provincial GDP and the economic impact of tourism in 2008 was in the order of R22 billion, employing 144 000 people in KwaZulu-Natal.

Also known as the “Zulu Kingdom”, KwaZulu-Natal is enticing, spectacular and a fascinating multicultural showpiece destination flanked by the warm Indian Ocean and soaring peaks.

Durban and surroundings

The gateway city of Durban is a pulsating and inviting fusion of East, West and Zulu motifs overlooking Africa’s busiest seaport. It is South Africa’s domestic tourism leader, highly popular among visitors from throughout Africa and increasingly on the “must-see, must-do” lists of discerning travellers.

These travellers from all points of the globe seek and find a unique blend of sophistication, cultural diversity and excitement – in the most breathtaking setting imaginable.

The Golden Mile skirts the main beaches of the Indian Ocean. Attractions include an amusement centre, paddling pools, paved walkways and fountains.

The uShaka Marine World has a theme park, oceanarium, dolphinarium and oceanographic research institute. It is home to a wide variety of sea life, including sharks, dolphins and seals. One of its main attractions is the long lane of shops and the multitude of restaurants, especially those in the old wreck (a replica of a ship wreck in the centre of the park), and a tourism information office at its entrance.

There is a snorkelling trail and a tubing river around the park.

Durban’s most popular fishing spot is at Blue Lagoon beach at the wide Umgeni River mouth. Beyond the river, the La Lucia and Beachwood Mangroves nature reserves offer long, tranquil walks along empty sands.

The Durban area has more than 50 reserves, developed parks and specialised gardens, the most renowned being the Municipal Botanical

The Kievits Kroon Country Estate and Spa in Pretoria and the Maski Bed and Breakfast in Hammanskraal were chosen as winners in their respective categories at the 2009 Tourism Indaba.



Garden. Besides the botanical gardens, Mitchell Park is one of the most popular green spaces and includes an outdoor restaurant and a zoo, plus a sizeable playground for children.

MiniTown is a model city depicting Durban's best-known buildings.

Museums include the Natural History Museum, the Natural Science Museum, the Old House Museum and the Old Fort. One of the most intriguing museums is the Maritime Museum, complete with two floating ships in the harbor.

The Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam Temple (the Second River Temple) in Cato Manor was the first Hindu temple in Africa. It is a national monument.

The Juma Masjid Mosque is the largest mosque in the southern hemisphere. Daily tours are available.

Annual events in and around the city include the popular Comrades Marathon between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, an international surfing competition, the Duzi canoe marathon, the Midmar Mile swimming event, the July Handicap horse-race and the Amashovashova cycle tour, as well as the largest road race in the country, the Spar Mercury Ladies 10-km Challenge.

Umhlanga Rocks, just north of Durban, is notable for its ski-boating facilities and the Ski-Boat Festival held every April. The Natal Sharks Board offers shark dissections and interesting displays. Guided tours of the Hawaan Forest are also on offer. Hawaan is the last relic of coastal forest in the region and contains rare indigenous trees.

The Umgeni River Bird Park overlooks the Umgeni River and ranks among the world's best bird sanctuaries. Many varieties of birds, indigenous and exotic, inhabit walk-in aviaries.

The Millennium Town at the end of the Bluff houses the maritime offices, which control the entry of ships into and out of the busiest port in Africa.

East Griqualand

East Griqualand is an area of great beauty, featuring colourful, living history. Kokstad lies in the Umzimhlava River basin between Mount Currie and the Ngele mountains.

The original town hall – built in 1910 – is a national monument, now serving as the local library. The former library – built in 1907 – is also a national monument and houses the Kokstad Museum.

The Weza State Forest runs through indigenous forests and commercial plantations. The forest

is home to several antelope species and a huge variety of birds.

East Griqualand is home to the southernmost portion of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site, plus the impressive Swartberg, Bokkiesberg, Cedarberg and Ngele mountain ranges.

Between Kokstad and Matatiele, the hamlet of Cedarville provides tranquil canoe-borne excursions into its surrounding, water-filled hollows. Also nearby, the carp-abundant Umzimvubu River is an ever-popular recreation ground for locals and visitors alike. Steam-train journeys can be undertaken between Swartberg and Creighton.

North Coast

Year-round frolicking dolphins and majestic seasonal whale migrations make the coastline between the Umdloti and the Thukela rivers aptly called the "Dolphin Coast". The larger humpback dolphins are also found here, but rarely seen.

Many of the first Indian immigrants settled here, and the area's markets, mosques and temples give the region an authentic Eastern flavour.

Tongaat is an area where sugar was first planted in 1854. The town's Indian ambience is accentuated by two prominent Hindu temples – the Juggernath Puri and Vishwaroop temples.

Other towns along the Dolphin Coast include Shaka's Rock, Salt Rock, Ballito, Verulam, Stanger, Darnall and Umdloti.

Zululand and the Elephant Coast

Big Five nature reserves of international repute amid Zulu customs in KwaZulu-Natal Zululand are found unbroken from antiquity. Cultural tourism is inextricably linked to economic upliftment in Zululand, and historically disadvantaged communities are applying their traditional skills to meet visitors' interests.

Zululand's north-east quadrant – between Mozambique, Swaziland and the warm Indian Ocean – has its own unique tale to tell. This is the Elephant Coast or Maputaland, named after the mid-17th century king who established dominion here some 200 years before Shaka consolidated his Zulu empire to the south. The Tembe Elephant Park in the far north is home to herds of the massive African elephant.

The Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park is one of the largest game parks in South Africa and hosts the Big Five as well as the elusive cheetah and wild dog.

The eMakhosini Valley, birthplace of King Shaka, is the venue for a new tourism- and economic-development project. Known as “eMakhosini, the Valley of Zulu Kings”, the joint public-private sector project aims to preserve the culture and history of the Zulu people. A sculptured hilltop monument named Spirit of eMakhosini draws many tourists. This heritage park is near a nature reserve that will eventually support the Big Five of the animal kingdom.

At the eMakhosini Memorial Site, seven Zulu kings are buried.

Ulundi lies at the hub of the old Zulu nation. The KwaZulu Cultural Museum houses interesting displays relating to Zulu history and archaeology. The beehive huts and the layout of the original Zulu village have been reproduced.

Umgungundlovu was once the royal capital of King Dingaan and is now being reconstructed. A tour provides the opportunity to observe Zulu building techniques and to experience the social life of the Zulu people. Work will begin on a R20-million multimedia centre, which will include first-rate audiovisual representations of Zulu history and culture.

Authentic Zulu villages such as Shakaland, Kwabhekithunga Kraal, Damazulu and Stewart’s Farm offer accommodation and the opportunity to experience traditional Zulu culture.

The coastal iSimangaliso Wetland Park World Heritage Site – due east of pivotal landmarks in Zulu history – has some of the highest forested dunes in the world. The park also has the greatest marine and terrestrial mammals, namely whales and elephants. St Lucia and its surroundings comprise a globally important wetland and has five separate ecosystems. It is a fishing and birdwatching paradise, and boat trips on the lake offer opportunities for crocodile and hippo sightings.

Ophansi entrance bridge in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park enables visitors to enjoy a unique beach and bush experience, with only an hour’s drive separating uMkhuze’s unique wildlife experience from Sodwana Bay’s world-class beaches and diving.

The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is part of the Coastal Forest Reserve between Mozambique and Sodwana Bay. The adjacent Indian Ocean provides exciting snorkelling and fishing opportunities. On offer is a four-day guided walking trail around the estuarine system.

uMkhuze is a small trade and transport centre. The Mkuze River cuts through the Ubombo moun-

tains before serving as a boundary for Zululand’s popular Mkuzi Game Reserve.

The Border Cave, a site of immense archaeological interest on the border of Swaziland, now also has an interpretation centre.

A monument has been erected for the first Zulu martyr, Maqhamusela Khanyli, in Mondli.

Lake Sibaya is South Africa’s largest natural freshwater lake, covering some 77 km².

Birdwatching and walks through the coastal forest are popular pastimes.

Sibaya Lake Lodge is the first South African ecotourism development jointly owned by private enterprise and the local community.

The coral reef in the Sodwana Bay National Park attracts hundreds of scuba-divers throughout the year, and, in summer, power-boaters arrive for some of the best marlin-fishing in the world.

South Coast

Amanzimtoti is popular for its safe swimming beaches and various other activities and attractions.

The Hibiscus Coast stretches between Umkomaas and the Wild Coast. Margate is the largest resort town along this coast, and is very popular during the holidays. The Hibiscus Festival is held there in July.

The Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve encompasses forest, rivers, rapids and ravines. Prolific bird life, including five kingfisher species and seven eagle species, inhabits the reserve, along with a variety of mammals. There is also a 140-m abseil and gorge swing for adrenalin junkies.

Port Edward is known for its safe swimming and good fishing opportunities. Nearby, the Umthamvuna Nature Reserve is noted for its beautiful scenery, bird life and many rare plant species.

The Shell Museum at Shelly Beach is well worth a visit. Other popular coastal towns include Port Shepstone, Ramsgate, St Michael’s-on-Sea, Uvongo and Scottburgh. Nature’s annual extravaganza – the unforgettable Sardine Run – strikes the South Coast around the end of June every year, when people flock to the beaches and anglers wait for the game fish, following the sardines, to arrive.

Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands

History-filled towns lead to adventure sports and game viewing, along with outlets for unique arts and crafts. Pietermaritzburg boasts various museums, including the Voortrekker Museum,

the Natal Museum and the Natal Steam Railway Museum, which offers steam-train rides on the second Sunday of every month. The Tatham Art Gallery is also extremely popular.

The Albert Falls Public Resort Nature Reserve and the Albert Falls Dam provide opportunities for sailing, canoeing and fishing. Birdwatching, horse-riding and hiking are also popular activities.

The Howick Falls are situated in the Nature Valley Reserve, where the river tumbles down 100 m in a single fall. There are several climbing routes.

The Midlands Meander is a scenic drive between Hilton and Mooi River, with some 430 ports of call en route, ranging from art studios, potters and painters, to herb gardens and cheese-makers.

Midmar Dam is zoned for yachting and powerboating. The 1 000-ha Midmar Game Park is inhabited by rhino, zebra, a wide variety of antelope species and waterfowl. The popular yearly Midmar Mile event attracts thousands of swimmers.

Drakensberg

The mountainous “Barrier of Spears” uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site, adorned with Stone Age cave paintings, forms the north-western border of KwaZulu-Natal. The entire area is a bird sanctuary, featuring, among other species, the endangered lammergeier (bearded vulture). The highest concentration of walks and trails in South Africa is found here.

The Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Park was declared a world heritage site in 2001 and consists of almost the entire Drakensberg mountain range from Bushman’s Neck in the south to the Royal Natal National Park in the north.

Peaks soar to over 3 000 m and are often snow-covered in winter. The park is administered by Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife. Their trout hatcheries are located in the Kamberg Reserve area. There are also trout hatcheries at Cathedral Peak.

The Lotheni Nature Reserve is notable for its trout-fishing facilities (angling permits are required). Relics of the area’s history have been preserved in the Settler Museum.

The Himeville Nature Reserve has two lakes stocked with trout. The Swamp Nature Reserve close by attracts a variety of waterfowl, including the rare wattled crane.

The Ndedema Gorge is located in the Mdedelelo Wilderness Area near Cathedral Peak and contains examples of Khoi and San art.

Sani Pass is the only road across the high escarpment between KwaZulu-Natal and the Kingdom of Lesotho. Sani Pass may be a road, but the top section is only passable in 4x4 vehicles. The Giant’s Cup hiking trail, starting at the foot of the pass, is described as one of South Africa’s finest. Giant’s Castle Game Reserve is especially known for its more than 5 000 San paintings. The Bushman Site Museum is well worth a visit.

The Royal Natal National Park offers many scenic highlights, including the Amphitheatre, Mont-aux-Sources and the Thukela falls.

Battlefields

The KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields Route has the highest concentration of battlefields and related military sites in South Africa. The Battlefields Route starts at Estcourt, winding north through Colenso and Ladysmith to Newcastle and Volksrust, and eastwards to Utrecht, Glencoe, Dundee, Nqutu, Paulpietersburg, Vryheid, Babanango and Ulundi.

All the towns along the route have their own unique charm and range of attractions: arts and crafts, scenic hiking trails, farm resorts, Zulu culture and roadside stalls. Game viewing, natural hot springs, horse trails and watersports can also be enjoyed.

The Chelmsford Nature Reserve near Newcastle is a birdwatcher’s paradise. Powerboating and carp-fishing are added attractions. Game includes springbok, zebra, rhino and blesbok. Other interesting places to visit are Majuba Hill and O’Neill’s Cottage.

The Ladysmith Siege Museum provides insight into the battles of Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkrans and Tugela Heights. Museum staff arrange guided tours to nearby battlefields such as Wagon Hill. Other attractions in Ladysmith include the statue of Gandhi, the All Saints Church, the Soofi Mosque and the Spioenkop Dam and Nature Reserve.

Near Dundee, tourists can visit various battlefields, including Ncome-Blood River, Isandlwana, Rorke’s Drift and Talana. The Talana Museum depicts various facets of the coal industry, as well as local Zulu, Boer and British history.

Rorke’s Drift was the setting for one of the most famous battles of the war. The main attraction is the Rorke’s Drift Battle Museum.

Acknowledgements

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